BULWER'S WORKS.

THE PARISIANS.

THE WORKS

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(LORD LYTTON)

THE PARISIANS.

WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?

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THE PARISIANS.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

THEY who chance to have read "The Coming Race" may perhaps remember that I, the adventurous discoverer of the land without a sun, concluded the sketch of my adventures by a brief reference to the malady which, though giving no perceptible notice of its encroachments, might, in the opinion of my medical attendant, prove suddenly fatal.

I had brought my little book to this somewhat melancholy close a few years before the date of its publication, and, in the meanwhile, I was induced to transfer my residence to Paris, in order to place myself under the care of an English physician, renowned for his successful treatment of complaints analogous to my own.

I was the more readiiy persuaded to undertake this journey, partly because I enjoyed a familiar acquaintance with the eminent physician referred to, who had commenced his career and founded his reputation in the United States, partly because I had become a solitary man, the ties of home broken, and dear friends of mine were domiciled in Paris, with whom I should be sure of tender sympathy and cheerful companionship. I had reason to be thankful for this change of residence: the skill of Dr. C—— soon restored me to health. Brought much into contact with various circles of Parisian society, I became acquainted with the persons, and a witness of the events, that form the substance of the tale I am about to submit to the public, which has treated my former book with so generous an indulgence. Sensitively tenacious of that character for strict and unalloyed veracity, which, I flatter myself, my account of the abodes and manners of the Vrilaya has established, I could have wished to preserve the following narrative no less jealously guarded than its predecessor from the vagaries of fancy. But truth undisguised, never welcome in any civilized community above ground, is exposed at this time to especial dangers in Paris; and my life would not be worth an hour's purchase if I exhibited her *in puris naturalibus* to the eyes of a people wholly unfamiliarized to a spectacle so indecorous. That care for one's personal safety, which is the first duty of thoughtful man, compels me therefore to reconcile the appearance of *la Vérité* to the *bienséances* of the polished society in which *la Liberté* admits no opinion not dressed after the last fashion.

Attired as fiction, Truth may be peacefully received; and, despite the necessity thus imposed by prudence, I indulge the modest hope that I do not in these pages unfaithfully represent certain prominent types of the brilliant population which has invented so many varieties of Koom-Posh;* and even when it appears hopelessly lost in the slough of a Glek-Nas, re-emerges fresh and lively as if from an invigorating plunge into the Fountain of Youth. *O Paris, foyer des idées, et œil du monde!*—animated contrast to the serene tranquillity of the Vril-ya, which, nevertheless, thy noisiest philosophers ever pretend to make the goal of their desires—of all communities on which shines the sun and descend the rains of heaven, fertilizing alike wisdom and folly, virtue and vice, in every city men have yet built on this earth, mayest thou, O Paris, be the last to brave the wants of the Coming Race and be reduced into cinders for the sake of the common good!

TISH.

PARIS, *August* 28, 1872.

* Koom-Posh, Glek-Nas. For the derivation of these terms and their metaphorical signification, I must refer the reader to "The Coming Race," chapter xii., on the language of the Vril-ya. To those who have not read or have forgotten that historical composition, it may be convenient to state briefly that Koom-Posh with the Vril-ya is the name for the government of the many, or the ascendancy of the most ignorant or hollow, and may be loosely rendered Hollow-Bosh. When Koom-Posh degenerates from popular ignorance into the popular ferocity which precedes its decease, the name for that state of things is Glek-Nas—viz., the univeral strife-rot.

BOOK FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

It was a bright day in the early spring of 1869. All Paris seemed to have turned out to enjoy itself. The Tuileries, the Champs Elysées, the Bois de Boulogne, swarmed with idlers. A stranger might have wondered where Toil was at work, and in what nook Poverty lurked concealed. A *millionaire* from the London Exchange, as he looked round on the *magasins*, the equipages, the dresses of the women; as he inquired the prices in the shops and the rent of apartments,—might have asked himself, in envious wonder, How on earth do those gay Parisians live? What is their fortune? Where does it come from?

As the day declined, many of the scattered loungers crowded into the Boulevards; the *cafés* and *restaurants* began to light up.

About this time a young man, who might be some five or six and twenty, was walking along the Boulevard des Italiens, heeding little the throng through which he glided his solitary way: there was that in his aspect and bearing which caught attention. He looked a somebody; but though unmistakably a Frenchman, not a Parisian. His dress was not in the prevailing mode,—to a practised eye it betrayed the taste and the cut of a provincial tailor. His gait was not that of the Parisian—less lounging, more stately; and, unlike the Parisian, he seemed indifferent to the gaze of others.

Nevertheless there was about him that air of dignity or distinction which those who are reared from their cradle in the pride of birth acquire so unconsciously that it seems hereditary and inborn. It must also be confessed that the young man himself was endowed with a considerable share of that nobility which Nature capriciously distributes among her favorites, with little respect for their pedigree and blazon—the nobility of form and face. He was tall and well-shaped, with graceful length of limb and fall of shoulders; his face was handsome, of the purest type of French masculine beauty—the nose inclined to be aquiline, and delicately thin, with finely-cut open nostrils; the complexion clear, the eyes large, of a light hazel, with dark lashes, the hair of a chestnut brown, with no tint of auburn, the beard and moutache a shade darker, clipped short, not disguising the outline of lips, which were now compressed, as if smiles had of late been unfamiliar to them; yet such compression did not seem in harmony with the physiognomical character of their formation, which was that assigned by Lavater to temperaments easily moved to gaiety and pleasure.

Another man, about his own age, coming quickly out of one of the streets of the Chaussée d'Antin, brushed close by the stately pedesdrian above described, caught sight of his countenance, stopped short, and exclaimed, "Alain!" The person thus abruptly accosted turned his eye tranquilly on the eager face, of which, all the lower part was enveloped in black beard; and slightly lifting his hat, with a gesture of the head that implied, "Sir, you are mistaken; I have not the honor to know you," continued his slow indifferent way. The would-be acquaintance was not so easily rebuffed. "*Peste*," he said, between his teeth, "I am certainly right. He is not much altered —of course *I am;* ten years of Paris would improve an orang-outang." Quickening his step, and regaining the side of the man he had called "Alain," he said, with a well-bred mixture of boldness and courtesy in his tone and countenance—

"Ten thousand pardons if I am wrong. But surely I accost Alain de Kerouec, son of the Marquis de Rochebriant."

"True, sir; but——"

"But you do not remember me, your old college friend, Frederic Lemercier?"

"Is it possible?" cried Alain, cordially, and with an animation which changed the whole character of his countenance. "My dear Frederic, my dear friend, this is indeed good fortune! So you, too, are at Paris?"

"Of course; and you? Just come, I perceive," he added, somewhat satirically, as, linking his arm in his new-found friend's, he glanced at the cut of that friend's coat-collar.

"I have been here a fortnight," replied Alain.

"Hem! I suppose you lodge in the old Hotel de Pochebriant. I passed it yesterday, admiring its vast *façade*, little thinking you were its inmate."

"Neither am I; the hotel does not belong to me—it was sold some years ago by my father."

"Indeed! I hope your father got a good price for it; those grand hotels have trebled their value within the last five years. And how is your father? Still the same polished *grand seigneur?* I never saw him but once, you know; and I shall never forget his smile, *style grand monarque*, when he patted me on the head and tipped me ten napoleons."

"My father is no more," said Alain, gravely; "he has been dead nearly three years."

"*Ciel!* forgive me, I am greatly shocked. Hem! so you are now the Marquis de Rochebriant, a great historical name, worth a large sum in the market. Few such names left. Superb place your old *château*, is it not?"

"A superb place, No—a venerable ruin, Yes!"

"Ah, a ruin! so much the better. All the bankers are mad after ruins—so charming an amusement to restore them. You will restore yours, without doubt. I will introduce you to such an architect! has the *moyen âge* at his finger's ends. Dear—but a genius."

The young Marquis smiled—for since he had found a college friend, his face showed that it could smile; smiled, but not cheerfully, and answered—

"I have no intention to restore Rochebriant. The walls are solid; they have weathered the storms of six centuries; they will last my time, and with me the race perishes."

"Bah! the race perish, indeed! you will marry. *Parlezmoi de ça*—you could not come to a better man. I have a list of all the heiresses at Paris, bound in Russia leather. You may take your choice out of twenty. Ah, if I were but a Rochebriant! It is an infernal thing to come into the world a Lemercier. I am a democrat, of course. A Lemercier would be in a false position if he were not. But if any one would leave me twenty acres of land, with some antique right to the De and a title, faith, would not I be an aristocrat, and stand up for my order? But now we have met, pray let us dine together. Ah! no doubt you are engaged every day for a month. A Rochebriant just new to Paris must be *fêté* by all the Faubourg."

"No," answered Alain, simply—"I am not engaged; my range of acquaintance is more circumscribed than you suppose."

"So much the better for me. I am luckily disengaged to-day, which is not often the case, for I am in some request in my own set, though it is not that of the Faubourg. Where shall we dine?—at the Trois Frères?"

"Wherever you please. I know no *restaurant* at Paris, except a very ignoble one, close by my lodging."

"*A propos*, where do you lodge?"

"Rue de l'Université, Numero * *."

"A fine street, but *triste*. If you have no longer your family hotel, you have no excuse to linger in that museum of mummies, the Faubourg St. Germain; you must go into one of the new quarters by the Champs Elysées. Leave it to me; I'll find you a charming apartment. I know one to be had a bargain—a bagatelle—500 naps a-year. Cost you about two or three thousand more to furnish tolerably, not showily. Leave all to me. In three days you shall be settled. *A propos!* horses! You must have English ones. How many?—three for the saddle, two for your *coupé?* I'll find them for you. I will write to London to-morrow. *Reese* (Rice) is your man."

"Spare yourself that trouble, my dear Frederic. I keep no horses and no *coupé*. I shall not change my apartment." As he said this, Rochebriant drew himself up somewhat haughtily.

"Faith," thought Lemercier, "is it possible that the Marquis is poor? No. I have always heard that the Rochebriants were among the greatest proprietors in Bretagne. Most likely with all his innocence of the Faubourg St.

Germain, he knows enough of it to be aware that I, Frederic Lemercier, am not the man to patronize one of its greatest nobles. *Sacre bleu!* if I thought that; if he meant to give himself airs to me, his old college friend—I would—I would call him out."

Just as M. Lemercier had come to that bellicose resolution, the Marquis said, with a smile which, though frank, was not without a certain grave melancholy in its expression, "My dear Frederic, pardon me if I seem to receive your friendly offers ungraciously. But believe that I have reasons you will approve for leading at Paris a life which you certainly will not envy;" then, evidently desirious to change the subject, he said in a livelier tone, "But what a marvellous city this Paris of ours is! Remember I had never seen it before: it burst on me like a city in the Arabian Nights two weeks ago. And that which strikes me most—I say it with regret and a pang of conscience—is certainly not the Paris of former times, but that Paris which M. Buonaparte — I beg pardon, which the Emperor — has called up around him, and identified for ever with his reign. It is what is new in Paris that strikes and enthrals me. Here I see the life of France, and I belong to her tombs!"

"I don't quite understand you," said Lemercier. "If you think that because your father and grandfather were Legitimists, you have not the fair field of living ambition open to you under the Empire, you never were more mistaken. *Moyen âge*, and even *rococo*, are all the rage. You have no idea how valuable your name would be either at the Imperial Court or in a Commercial Company. But with your fortune you are independent of all but fashion and the Jockey Club. And *à propos* of that, pardon me—what villain made your coat?—let me know; I will denounce him to the police."

Half amused, half amazed, Alain Marquis de Rochebriant looked at Frederic Lemercier much as a good-tempered lion may look upon a lively poodle who takes a liberty with his mane, and, after a pause, he replied curtly, "The clothes I wear at Paris were made at Bretagne; and if the name of Rochebriant be of any value at all in Paris, which I doubt, let me trust that it will make me acknowledged as *gentilhomme*, whatever my taste in a coat or whatever the doctrines of a club composed—of jockeys."

"Ha, ha!" cried Lemercier, freeing himself from the arm of his friend, and laughing the more irresistibly as he encountered the grave look of the Marquis. "Pardon me—I can't help it—the Jockey Club—composed of jockeys!—it is too much;—the best joke. My dear Alain, there is some of the best blood of Europe in the Jockey Club; they would exclude a plain *bourgeois* like me. But it is all the same—in one respect you are quite right. Walk in a *blouse* if you please—you are still Rochebriant—you would only be called eccentric. Alas! I am obliged to send to London for my pantaloons; that comes of being a Lemercier. But here we are in the Palais Royal."

CHAPTER II.

THE *salons* of the Trois Frères were crowded —our friends found a table with some little difficulty. Lemercier proposed a private cabinet, which, for some reason known to himself, the Marquis declined.

Lemercier spontaneously and unrequested ordered the dinner and the wines.

While waiting for their oysters, with which, when in season, French *bon-vivants* usually commence their dinner, Lemercier looked round the *salon* with that air inimitable, scrutinizing, superb impertinence which distinguishes the Parisian dandy. Some of the ladies returned his glance coquettishly, for Lemercier was *beau garçon;* others turned aside indignantly, and muttered something to the gentlemen dining with them. The said, gentlemen, when old, shook their heads, and continued to eat unmoved; when young, turned briskly round, and look at first fiercely at M. Lemercier, but, encountering his eye through the glass which he had screwed into its socket—noticing the hardihood of his countenance and the squareness of his shoulders—even they turned back to the tables, shook their heads, and continued to eat unmoved, just like the old ones.

"Ah!" cried Lemercier, suddenly, "here comes a man you should know, *mon cher*. He will tell you how to place your money—a rising man—a coming man—a future minister.

Ah ! *bon jour*, Duplessis, *bon jour*," kissing his hand to a gentleman who had just entered, and was looking about him for a seat. He was evidently well and favorably known at the Trois Frères. The waiters had flocked round him, and were pointing to a table by the window, which a saturnine Englishman, who had dined off a beefsteak and potatoes, was about to vacate.

Mons. Duplessis, having first assured himself, like a prudent man, that his table was secure, having ordered his oysters, his chablis, and his *potage à la bisque*, now paced calmly and slowly across the *salon*, and halted before Lemercier.

Here let me pause for a moment, and give the reader a rapid sketch of the two Parisians.

Frederic Lemercier is dressed, somewhat too showily, in the extreme of the prevalent fashion. He wears a superb pin in his cravat a pin worth 2,000 francs; he wears rings on his fingers, *breloques* to his watch-chain. He has a warm though dark complexion, thick black eyebrows, full lips, a nose somewhat turned up, but not small, very fine large dark eyes, a bold, open, somewhat impertinent expression of countenance — withal decidedly handsome, thanks to coloring, youth, and vivacity of "*regard*."

Lucien Duplessis, bending over the table, glancing first with curiosity at the Marquis de Rochebriant, who leans his cheek on his hand and seems not to notice him, then concentrating his attention on Frederic Lemercier, who sits square with his hands clasped—Lucien Duplessis is somewhere between forty and fifty, rather below the middle height, slender but not slight—what in English phrase is called "wiry." He is dressed with extreme simplicity: black frock-coat buttoned up; black cravat worn higher than men who follow the fashions wear their neck-cloths now a-days; a hawk's eye and a hawk's beak; hair of a dull brown, very short, and wholly without curl; his cheeks thin and smoothly shaven, but he wears a moustache and imperial, plagarized from those of his sovereign, and, like all plagiarisms, carrying the borrowed beauty to extremes, so that the points of moustache and imperial, stiffened and sharpened by cosmetics which must have been composed of iron, looked like three long strings guarding lip and jaw from invasion; a pale, olive-brown complexion; eyes small, deep-sunk, calm, piercing; his expression of face at first glance not striking, except for quiet immovability. Observed more heedfully, the expression was keenly intellectual—determined about the lips, calculating about the brows: altogether the face of no ordinary man, and one not, perhaps, without fine and high qualities, concealed from the general gaze by habitual reserve, but justifying the confidence of those whom he admitted into his intimacy.

"Ah, *mon cher*," said Lemercier, "you promised to call on me yesterday at two o'clock. I waited in for you half an hour; you never came."

"No; I went first to the *Bourse*. The shares in that Company we spoke of have fallen; they will fall much lower—foolish to buy in yet; so the object of my calling on you was over. I took it for granted you would not wait if I failed my appointment. Do you go to the opera to-night?"

"I think not—nothing worth going for; besides, I have found an old friend, to whom I consecrate this evening. Let me introduce you do the Marquis de Rochebriant. Alain, M. Duplessis."

The two gentlemen bowed.

"I had the honor to be known to Monsieur your father," said Duplessis.

"Indeed," returned Rochebriant. "He had not visited Paris for many years before he died."

"It was in London I met him, at the house of the Russian Princess C——."

The Marquis colored high, inclined his head gravely, and made no reply. Here the waiter brought the oysters and the chablis, and Duplessis retired to his own table.

"That is the most extraordinary man," said Frederic, as he squeezed the lemon over his oysters, "and very much to be admired."

"How so? I see nothing at least to admire in his face," said the Marquis, with the bluntness of a provincial.

"His face. Ah! you are a Legitimist—party prejudice. He dresses his face after the the Emperor; in itself a very clever face, surely."

"Perhaps, but not an amiable one. He looks like a bird of prey."

"All clever men are birds of prey. The eagles are the heroes, and the owls the sages. Duplessis is not an eagle nor an owl. I

should rather call him a falcon, except that I would not attempt to hoodwink him."

"Call him what you will," said the Marquis, indifferently; "M. Duplessis can be nothing to me."

"I am not so sure of that," answered Frederic, somewhat nettled by the phlegm with which the Provincial regarded the pretensions of the Parisian. "Duplessis, I repeat it, is an extraordinary man. Though untitled, he descends from your old aristocracy; in fact, I believe, as his name shows, from the same stem as the Richelieus. His father was a great scholar, and I believe he has read much himself. Might have distinguished himself in literature or at the bar, but his parents died fearfully poor; and some distant relations in commerce took charge of him, and devoted his talents to the *Bourse*. Seven years ago he lived in a single chamber, *au quatrième*, near the Luxembourg. He has now a hotel, not large but charming, in the Champs Elysées, worth at least 600,000 francs. Nor has he made his own fortune alone, but that of many others; some of birth as high as your own. He has the genius of riches, and knocks off a million as a poet does an ode, by the force of inspiration. He is hand-in-glove with the Ministers, and has been invited to Compiègne by the Emperor. You will find him very useful."

Alain made a slight movement of incredulous dissent, and changed the conversation to reminiscences of old schoolboy days.

The dinner at length came to a close. Frederic rang for the bill—glanced over it. "Fifty-nine francs," said he carelessly flinging down his napoleon and a half. The Marquis silently drew forth his purse and extracted the same sum.

When they were out of the *restaurant*, Frederic proposed adjourning to his own rooms. "I can promise you an excellent cigar, one of a box given to me by an invaluable young Spaniard attached to the Embassy here. Such cigars are not to be had at Paris for money, nor even for love, seeing that women, however devoted and generous, never offer you anything better than a cigarette. Such cigars are only to be had for friendship. Friendship is a jewel."

"I never smoke," answered the Marquis, "but I shall be charmed to come to your rooms; only don't let me encroach on your good-nature. Doubtless you have engagements for the evening."

"None till eleven o'clock, when I have promised to go to a *soirée* to which I do not offer to take you; for it is one of those Bohemian entertainments at which it would do you harm in the Faubourg to assist—at least until you have made good your position. Let me see, is not the Duchesse de Tarascon a relation of yours?"

"Yes; my poor mother's first cousin."

"I congratulate you. *Très grande dame.* She will launch you *in pura cælo*, as Juno might have launched one of her young peacocks."

"There has been no acquaintance between our houses," returned the Marquis, drily, "since the *mésalliance* of her second nuptials."

"*Mésalliance!* second nuptials! Her second husband was the Duc de Tarascon."

"A duke of the First Empire—the grandson of a butcher."

"*Diable!* you are a severe genealogist, Monsieur le Marquis. How can you consent to walk arm-in-arm with me, whose great-grandfather supplied bread to the same army to which the Duc de Tarascon's grandfather furnished the meat?"

"My dear Frederic, we two have an equal pedigree, for our friendship dates from the same hour. I do not blame the Duchesse de Tarascon for marrying the grandson of a butcher, but for marrying the son of a man made duke by an usurper. She abandoned the faith of her house and the cause of her sovereign. Therefore her marriage is a blot on our scutcheon."

Frederic raised his eyebrows, but had the tact to pursue the subject no further. He who interferes in the quarrels of relations must pass through life without a friend.

The young men now arrived at Lemercier's apartment, an *entresol* looking on the Boulevard des Italiens, consisting of more rooms than a bachelor generally requires; low-pitched, indeed, but of good dimensions, and decorated and furnished with a luxury which really astonished the provincial, though, with the high-bred pride of an Oriental, he suppressed every sign of surprise.

Florentine cabinets freshly re-touched by the exquisite skill of Mombro, costly speci-

mens of old Sèvres and Limoges; pictures and bronzes and marble statuettes—all well chosen and of great price, reflected from mirrors in Venetian frames — made a *coup d'œil* very favorable to that respect which the human mind pays to the evidences of money. Nor was comfort less studied than splendor. Thick carpets covered the floors, doubled and quilted *portiéres* excluded all draughts from chinks in the doors. Having allowed his friend a few minutes to contemplate and admire the *salle-à-manger* and *salon* which constituted his more state apartments, Frederic then conducted him into a small cabinet, fitted up with scarlet cloth and gold fringes, whereon were artistically arranged trophies of Eastern weapons and Turkish pipes with amber mouth-pieces.

There, placing the Marquis at ease on a divan, and flinging himself on another, the Parisian exquisite ordered a valet, well dressed as himself, to bring coffee and liqueurs; and after vainly pressing one of his matchless cigars on his friend, indulged in his own regalia.

"They are ten years old," said Frederic, with a tone of compassion at Alain's self-inflicted loss—"ten years old. Born therefore about the year in which we two parted——"

"When you were so hastily summoned from college," said the Marquis, "by the news of your father's illness. We expected you back in vain. Have you been at Paris ever since?"

"Ever since. My poor father died of that illness. His fortune proved much larger than was suspected—my share amounted to an income from investments in stocks, houses, etc., to upwards of 60,000 francs a year; and as I wanted six years to my majority, of course the capital on attaining my majority would be increased by accumulation. My mother desired to keep me near her; my uncle, who was joint guardian with her, looked with disdain on our poor little provincial cottage, so promising an heir should acquire his finishing education under masters at Paris. Long before I was of age, I was initiated into politer mysteries of our capital than those celebrated by Eugene Sue. When I took possession of my fortune five years ago, I was considered a Crœsus; and really for that patriarchal time I was wealthy. Now, alas! my accumulations have vanished in my outfit; and 60,000 francs a year is the least a Parisian can live upon. It is not only that all prices have fabulously increased, but that the dearer things become the better people live. When I first came out, the world speculated upon me; now, in order to keep my standing, I am forced to speculate on the world. Hitherto I have not lost. Duplessis let me into a few good things this year, worth 100,000 francs or so. Crœsus consulted the Delphic Oracle. Duplessis was not alive in the time of Crœsus, or Crœsus would have consulted Duplessis."

Here there was a ring at the outer door of the apartment, and in another minute the valet ushered in a gentleman somewhere about the age of thirty, of prepossessing countenance, and with the indefinable air of good-breeding and *usage du monde*. Frederic started up to greet cordially the new-comer, and introduced him to the Marquis under the name of "Sare Grarm Varn."

"Decidedly," said the visitor, as he took off his paletôt and seated himself beside the Marquis—"decidedly, my dear Lemercier," said he, in very correct French, and with the true Parisian accent and intonation. "You Frenchmen merit that praise for polished ignorance of the language of barbarians which a distinguished historian bestows on the ancient Romans. Permit me, Marquis, to submit to you the consideration whether Grarm Varn is a fair rendering of my name as truthfully printed on this card."

The inscription on the card, thus drawn from its case and placed in Alain's hand, was—

MR. GRAHAM VANE,
No. — Rue d'Anjou.

The Marquis gazed at it as he might on a hieroglyphic, and passed it on to Lemercier in discreet silence.

That gentleman made another attempt at the barbarian appellation.

"'Grar—ham Varne.' *C'est ça!* I triumph! all difficulties yield to French energy."

Here the coffee and liqueurs were served; and after a short pause the Englishman, who had very quietly been observing the silent Marquis, turned to him and said, "Monsieur le Marquis, I presume it was your father whom I remember as an acquaintance of my own father at Ems. It is many years ago; I was but a child. The Count de Chambord was then at that enervating little spa for the benefit of the Countess's health. If our friend Lemer-

cier does not mangle your name as he does mine, I understand him to say that you are the Marquis de Rochebriant."

"That is my name: it pleases me to hear that my father was among those who flocked to Ems to do homage to the royal personage who deigns to assume the title of Count de Chambord."

"My own ancestors clung to the descendants of James II. till their claims were buried in the grave of the last Stuart; and I honor the gallant men who, like your father, revere in an exile the heir to their ancient kings."

The Englishman said this with grace and feeling; the Marquis's heart warmed to him at once.

"The first loyal *gentilhomme* I have met at Paris," thought the Legitimist; "and, oh shame! not a Frenchman!"

Graham Vane, now stretching himself and accepting the cigar which Lemercier offered him, said to that gentleman: "You who know your Paris by heart—everybody and everything therein worth the knowing, with many bodies and many things that are not worth it—can you inform me who and what is a certain lady who every fine day may be seen walking in a quiet spot at the outskirts of the Bois de Boulogne, not far from the Baron de Rothschild's villa? The said Lady arrives at this selected spot in a dark-blue *coupé* without armorial bearings, punctually at the hour of three. She wears always the same dress, a kind of gray pearl colored silk, with a *cachemire* shawl. In age she may be somewhat about twenty—a year or so more or less—and has a face as haunting as a Medusa's; not, however, a face to turn a man into a stone, but rather of the two turn a stone into a man. A clear paleness, with a bloom like an alabaster lamp with the light flashing through. I borrow that illustration from Sare Scott, who applied it to Milor Bee-ron."

"I have not seen the lady you describe," answered Lemercier, feeling humiliated by the avowal; "in fact, I have not been in that sequestered part of the Bois for months; but I will go to-morrow: three o'clock you say—leave it to me; to-morrow evening, if she is a Parisienne, you shall know all about her. But, *mon cher*, you are not of a jealous temperament to confide your discovery to another."

"Yes, I am of a very jealous temperament," replied the Englishman; "but jealousy comes after love, and not before it. I am not in love; I am only haunted. To-morrow evening, then, shall we dine here at Philippe's, seven o'clock."

"With all my heart," said Lermercier; "and you, too, Alain."

"Thank you, no," said the Marquis, briefly; and he rose, drew on his gloves, and took up his hat.

At these signals of departure, the Englishman, who did not want tact nor delicacy, thought that he had made himself *de trop* in the *tête-à-tête* of two friends of the same age and nation; and, catching up his paletôt, said hastily, "No, Marquis, do not go yet, and leave our host in solitude; for I have an engagement which presses, and only looked in at Lemercier's for a moment, seeing the light at his windows. Permit me to hope that our acquaintance will not drop, and inform me where I may have the honor to call on you."

"Nay," said the Marquis; "I claim the right of a native to pay my respects first to the foreigner who visits our capital, and," he added in a lower tone, "who speaks so nobly of those who revere its exiles."

The Englishman saluted, and walked slowly towards the door; but on reaching the threshold turned back and made a sign to Lemercier, unperceived by Alain.

Frederic understood the sign, and followed Graham Vane into the adjoining room, closing the door as he passed.

"My dear Lemercier, of course I should not have intruded on you at this hour on a mere visit of ceremony. I called to say that the Mademoiselle Duval whose address you sent me is not the right one—not the lady whom, knowing your wide range of acquaintance, I asked you to aid me in finding out."

"Not the right Duval? *Diable!* she answered your description exactly."

"Not at all."

"You said she was very pretty and young—under twenty."

"You forgot that I said she deserved that description twenty-one years ago."

"Ah, so you did; but some ladies are always young. 'Age,' says a wit in the *Figaro*, 'is a river which the women compel to reascend to its source when it has flowed onward more than twenty years.' Never mind—*soyez tranquille*—I will find your Duval yet if she is

to be found. But why could not the friend who commissioned you to inquire choose a name less common? Duval! every street in Paris has a shop-door over which is inscribed the name of Duval."

"Quite true, there is the difficulty; however, my dear Lemercier, pray continue to look out for a Louise Duval who was young and pretty twenty-one years ago—this search ought to interest me more than that which I intrusted to you to-night, respecting the pearly-robed lady: for in the last I but gratify my own whim; in the first I discharge a promise to a friend. You, so perfect a Frenchman, know the difference; honor is engaged to the first. Be sure you let me know if you find any other Madame or Mademoiselle Duval; and of course you remember your promise not to mention to any one the commission of inquiry you so kindly undertake. I congratulate you on your friendship for M. de Rochebriant. What a noble countenance and manner!"

Lemercier returned to the Marquis. "Such a pity you can't dine with us to-morrow. I fear you made but a poor dinner to-day. But it is always better to arrange the *menu* beforehand. I will send to Philippe's to-morrow. Do not be afraid."

The Marquis paused a moment, and on his young face a proud struggle was visible. At last he said, bluntly and manfully—

"My dear Frederic, your world and mine are not and cannot be the same. Why should I be ashamed to own to my old schoolfellow that I am poor—very poor; that the dinner I have shared with you to-day is to me a criminal extravagance? I lodge in a single chamber on the fourth story; I dine off a single *plat* at a small *restaurateur's;* the utmost income I can allow to myself does not exceed 5,000 francs a year: my fortunes I cannot hope much to improve. In his own country Alain de Rochebriant has no career."

Lemercier was so astonished by this confession that he remained for some moments silent, eyes and mouth both wide open; at length he sprang up, embraced his friend well-nigh sobbing, and exclaimed, "*Tant mieux pour moi!* You must take your lodging with me. I have a charming bed-room to spare. Don't say no. It will raise my own position to say 'I and Rochebriant keep house together.' It must be so. Come here to-morrow. As for not having a career—bah! I and Duplessis will settle that. You shall be a *millionnaire* in two years. Meanwhile we will join capitals: I my paltry notes, you your grand name. Settled?"

"My dear, dear Frederic," said the young noble, deeply affected, "on reflection you will see what you propose is impossible. Poor I may be without dishonor; live at another man's cost I cannot do without baseness. It does not require to be *gentilhomme* to feel that: it is enough to be a Frenchman. Come and see me when you can spare the time. There is my address. You are the only man in Paris to whom I shall be at home. *Au revoir.*" And breaking away from Lemercier's clasp, the Marquis hurried off.

CHAPTER III.

ALAIN reached the house in which he lodged. Externally a fine house, it had been the hotel of a great family in the old *régime.* On the first floor were still superb apartments, with ceilings painted by Le Brun, with walls on which the thick silks still seemed fresh. These rooms were occupied by a rich *agent de change;* but, like all such ancient palaces, the upper storeys were wretchedly defective even in the comforts which poor men demand now-a-days: a back staircase, narrow dirty, never lighted, dark as Erebus, led to the room occupied by the Marquis, which might be naturally occupied by a needy student or a virtuous *grisette.* But there was to him a charm in that old hotel, and the richest *locataire* therein was not treated with a respect so ceremonious as that which attended the lodger on the fourth storey. The porter and his wife were Bretons; they came from the village of Rochebriant; they had known Alain's parents in their young days; it was their kinsman who had recommended him to the hotel which they served: so, when he paused at the lodge for his key, which he had left there, the porter's wife was in waiting for his return, and insisted on lighting him upstairs and seeing to his fire, for after a warm day the night had turned to that sharp biting cold which is more trying in Paris than even in London.

The old woman, running up the stairs be-

fore him, opened the door of his room, and busied herself at the fire. "Gently, my good Marthe," said he, "that log suffices. I have been extravagant to-day, and must pinch for it."

"M. le Marquis jests," said the old woman laughing.

"No, Marthe; I am serious. I have sinned, but I shall reform. *Entre nous*, my dear friend, Paris is very dear when one sets one's foot out of doors: I must soon go back to Rochebriant."

"When M. le Marquis goes back to Rochebriant he must take with him a Madame la Marquise—some pretty angel with a suitable *dot*."

"A *dot* suitable to the ruins of Rochebriant would not suffice to repair them, Marthe: give me my dressing-gown, and good-night."

"*Bon repos, M. le Marquis! beaux rêves, et bel avenir.*"

"*Bel avenir!* murmured the young man bitterly, leaning his cheek on his hand; "what fortune fairer than the present can be mine? yet inaction in youth is more keenly felt than in age. How lightly I should endure poverty if it brought poverty's ennobling companion, Labor—denied to me! Well, well; I must go back to the old rock: on this ocean there is no sail, not even an oar, for me."

Alain de Rochebriant had not been reared to the expectation of poverty. The only son of a father whose estates were large beyond those of most nobles in modern France, his destined heritage seemed not unsuitable to his illustrious birth. Educated at a provincial academy, he had been removed at the age of sixteen to Rochebriant, and lived there simply and lonely enough, but still in a sort of feudal state, with an aunt, an elder and unmarried sister to his father.

His father he never saw but twice after leaving college. That brilliant *seigneur* visited France but rarely, for very brief intervals, residing wholly abroad. To him went all the revenues of Rochebriant save what sufficed for the *ménage* of his son and his sister. It was the cherished belief of these two loyal natures that the Marquis secretly devoted his fortune to the cause of the Bourbons—how, they knew not, though they often amused themselves by conjecturing; and the young man, as he grew up, nursed the hope that he should soon hear that the descendant of Henri Quatre had crossed the frontier on a white charger and hoisted the old gonfalon with its *fleur-de-lis*. Then, indeed, his own career would be opened, and the sword of Kerouecs drawn from its sheath. Day after day he expected to hear of revolts, of which his noble father was doubtless the soul. But the Marquis, though a sincere Legitimist, was by no means an enthusiastic fanatic. He was simply a very proud, a very polished, a very luxurious, and, though not without the kindliness and generosity which were common attributes of the old French *noblesse*, a very selfish *grand seigneur*.

Losing his wife (who died the first year of marriage in giving birth to Alain) while he was yet very young, he had lived a frank libertine life until he fell submissive under the despotic yoke of a Russian Princess, who, for some mysterious reason, never visited her own country and obstinately refused to reside in France. She was fond of travel, and moved yearly from London to Naples, Naples to Vienna, Berlin, Madrid, Seville, Carlsbad, Baden-Baden—anywhere for caprice or change, except Paris. This fair wanderer succeeded in chaining to herself the heart and the steps of the Marquis de Rochebriant.

She was very rich; she lived semi-royally. Hers was just the house in which it suited the Marquis to be the *enfant gâté*. I suspect that, cat-like, his attachment was rather to the house than to the person of his mistress. Not that he was domiciled with the Princess; that would have been somewhat too much against the proprieties, greatly too much against the Marquis's notions of his own dignity. He had his own carriage, his own apartments, his own *suite*, as became so grand a *seigneur*, and the lover of so grand a *dame*. His estates, mortgaged before he came to them, yielded no income sufficient for his wants; he mortgaged deeper and deeper, year after year, till he could mortgage them no more. He sold his hotel at Paris—he accepted without scruple his sister's fortune—he borrowed with equal *sang froid* the two hundred thousand francs which his son on coming of age inherited from his mother. Alain yielded that fortune to him without a murmur—nay, with pride; he thought it destined to go towards raising a regiment for the *fleur-de-lis*.

To do the Marquis justice, he was fully persuaded that he should shortly restore to his

sister and son what he so recklessly took from them. He was engaged to be married to his Princess so soon as her own husband died. She had been separated from the Prince for many years, and every year it was said he could not last a year longer. But he completed the measure of his conjugal iniquities by continuing to live; and one day, by mistake, Death robbed the lady of the Marquis instead of the Prince.

This was an accident which the Marquis had never counted upon. He was still young enough to consider himself young; in fact, one principal reason for keeping Alain secluded in Bretagne was his reluctance to introduce into the world a son "as old as myself" he would say pathetically. The news of his death, which happened at Baden after a short attack of bronchitis caught in a supper *al fresco* at the old castle, was duly transmitted to Rochebriant by the Princess; and the shock to Alain and his aunt was the greater because they had seen so little of the departed that they regarded him as a heroic myth, an impersonation of ancient chivalry, condemning himself to voluntary exile rather than do homage to usurpers. But from their grief they were soon roused by the terrible doubt whether Rochebriant could still be retained in the family. Besides the mortgagees, creditors from half the capitals in Europe sent in their claims; and all the movable effects transmitted to Alain by his father's confidential Italian valet, except sundry carriages and horses which were sold at Baden for what they would fetch, were a magnificent dressing-case, in the secret drawers of which were some bank-notes amounting to thirty thousaad francs, and three large boxes containing the Marquis's correspondence, a few miniature female portraits, and a great many locks of hair.

Wholly unprepared for the ruin that stared him in the face, the young Marquis evinced the natural strength of his character by the calmness with which he met the danger, and the intelligence with which he calculated and reduced it.

By the help of the family notary in the neighboring town, he made himself master of his liabilities and his means; and he found that, after paying all debts and providing for the interest of the mortgages, a property which ought to have realized a rental of £10,000 a-year, yielded not more than £400. Nor was even this margin safe, nor the property out of peril; for the principal mortgagee, who was a capitalist in Paris named Louvier, having had during the life of the late Marquis more than once to wait for his half-yearly interest longer than suited his patience—and his patience was not enduring—plainly declared that if the same delay recurred he should put his right of seizure in force; and in France still more than in England, bad seasons seriously affect the security of rents. To pay away £9-600 a-year regularly out of £10,000, with the penalty of forfeiting the whole if not paid, whether crops may fail, farmers procrastinate, and timber fall in price, is to live with the sword of Damocles over one's head.

For two years and more, however, Alain met his difficulties with prudence and vigor; he retrenched the establishment hitherto kept at château, resigned such rural pleasures as he had been accustomed to indulge, and lived like one of his petty farmers. But the risks of the future remained undiminished.

"There is but one way, Monsieur le Marquis," said the family notary, M. Hébert, "by which you can put your estate in comparative safety. Your father raised his mortgages from time to time, as he wanted money, and often at interest above the average market interest. You may add considerably to your income by consolidating all these mortgages into one at a lower percentage, and in so doing pay off this formidable mortgagee, M. Louvier, who, I shrewdly suspect, is bent upon becoming the proprietor of Rochebriant. Unfortunately, those few portions of your land which were but lightly charged, and, lying contiguous to small proprietors, were coveted by them, and could be advantageously sold, are already gone to pay the debts of Monsieur the late Marquis. There are, however, too small farms which, bordering close on the town of S——, I think I could dispose of for building purposes at high rates; but these lands are covered by Monsieur Louvier's general mortgage, and he has refused to release them unless the whole debt be paid. Were that debt therefore transferred to another mortgagee, we might stipulate for their exception, and in so doing, secure a sum of more than 100,000 francs, which you could keep in reserve for a pressing or unforeseen occasion, and make the nucleus of a capital devoted to the gradual

liquidation of the charges on the estate. For with a little capital, Monsieur le Marquis, your rent-roll might be very greatly increased, the forests and orchards improved, those meadows round S—— drained and irrigated. Agriculture is beginning to be understood in Bretagne, and your estate would soon double its value in the hands of a spirited capitalist. My advice to you, therefore, is to go to Paris, employ a good *avoué*, practised in such branch of his profession, to negotiate the consolidation of your mortgages upon terms that will enable you to sell outlying portions, and so pay off the charge by instalments agreed upon;—to see if some safe company or rich individual can be found to undertake for a term of years the management of your forests, the draining of the S—— meadows, the superintendence of your fisheries, etc. They, it is true, will monopolize the profits for many years—perhaps twenty; but you are a young man; at the end of that time you will re-enter on your estate with a rental so improved that the mortgages, now so awful, will seem to you comparatively trivial."

In pursuance of this advice, the young Marquis had come to Paris fortified with a letter from M. Hébert to an *avoué* of eminence, and with many letters from his aunt to the nobles of the Faubourg connected with his house. Now one reason why M. Hébert had urged his client to undertake this important business in person, rather than volunteer his own services in Paris, was somewhat extra-professional. He had a sincere and profound affection for Alain; he felt compassion for that young life so barrenly wasted in seclusion and severe privations; he respected, but was too practical a man of business to share, those chivalrous sentiments of loyalty to an exiled dynasty which disqualified the man for the age he lived in, and, if not greatly modified, would cut him off from the hopes and aspirations of his eager generation. He thought plausibly enough that the air of the grand metropolis was necessary to the mental health, enfeebled and withering amidst the feudal mists of Bretagne; that once in Paris, Alain would imbibe the ideas of Paris, adapt himself to some career leading to honor and to fortune, for which he took facilities from his high birth, an historical name too national for any dynasty not to welcome among its adherents, and an intellect not yet sharpened by contact and competition with others, but in itself vigorous, habituated to thought, and vivified by the noble aspirations which belong to imaginative natures.

At the least, Alain would be at Paris in the social position which would afford him the opportunities of a marriage, in which his birth and rank would be readily accepted as an equivalent to some ample fortune that would serve to redeem the endangered *seigneuries*. He therefore warned Alain that the affair for which he went to Paris might be tedious, that lawyers were always slow, and advised him to calculate on remaining several months, perhaps a year; delicately suggesting that his rearing hitherto had been too secluded for his age and rank, and that a year at Paris, even if he failed in the object which took him there, would not be thrown away in the knowledge of men and things that would fit him better to grapple with his difficulties on his return.

Alain divided his spare income between his aunt and himself, and had come to Paris resolutely determined to live within the £200 a-year which remained to his share. He felt the revolution in his whole being that commenced when out of sight of the petty principality in which he was the object of that feudal reverence, still survivlng in the more unfrequented parts of Bretagne, for the representatives of illustrious names connected with the immemorial legends of the province.

The very bustle of a railway, with its crowd and quickness and unceremonious democracy of travel, served to pain and confound and humiliate that sense of individual dignity in which he had been nurtured. He felt that, once away from Rochebriant, he was but a cipher in the sum of human beings. Arrived at Paris, and reaching the gloomy hotel to which he had been recommended, he greeted even the desolation of that solitude which is usually so oppressive to a stranger in the metropolis of his native land. Loneliness was better than the loss of self in the reek and pressure of an unfamiliar throng. For the first few days he had wandered over Paris without calling even on the *avoué* to whom M. Hébert had directed him. He felt with the instinctive acuteness of a mind which, under sounder training, would have achieved no mean distinction, that it was a safe precaution to imbue himself with the atmosphere of the

place, and seize on those general ideas which in great capitals are so contagious that they are often more accurately caught by the first impressions than by subsequent habit, before he brought his mind into collision with those of the individuals he had practically to deal with.

At last he repaired to the *avoué*, M. Gandrin, Rue St. Florentin. He had mechanically formed his idea of the abode and person of an *avoué* from his association with M. Hébert. He expected to find a dull house in a dull street near the centre of business, remote from the haunts of idlers, and a grave man of unpretending exterior and matured years.

He arrived at a hotel newly fronted, richly decorated, in the fashionable *quartier* close by the Tuileries. He entered a wide *porte cochère*, and was directed hy the *concierge* to mount *au premier*. There, first detained in an office faultlessly neat, with spruce young men at smart desks, he was at length admitted into a noble *salon*, and into the presence of a gentleman lounging in an easy-chair before a magnificent bureau of *marqueterie*, *genre Louis Seize*, engaged in patting a white curley lapdog, with a pointed nose and a shrill bark.

The gentleman rose politely on his entrance, and released the dog, who, after sniffing the Marquis, condescended not to bite.

"Monsieur le Marquis," said M. Grandrin, glancing at the card and the introductory note from M. Hébert, which Alain had sent in, and which lay on the *secrétaire* beside heaps of letters nicely arranged and labelled, "charmed to make the honor of your acquaintance; just arrived at Paris? So M. Hébert—a very worthy person whom I have never seen, but with whom I have had correspondence—tells me you wish for my advice; in fact, he wrote to me some days ago, mentioning the business in question—consolidation of mortgages. A very large sum wanted, Monsieur le Marquis, and not to be had easily."

"Nevertheless," said Alain, quietly, "I should imagine that there must be many capitalists in Paris willing to invest in good securities at fair interest."

"You are mistaken, Marquis; very few such capitalists. Men worth money now-a-days like quick returns and large profits, thanks to the magnificent system of *Crédit Mobilier*, in which, as you are aware, a man may place his money in any trade or speculation without liabilities beyond his share. Capitalists are nearly all traders or speculators."

"Then," said the Marquis, half rising, "I am to presume, sir, that you are not likely to assist me."

"No, I don't say that, Marquis. I will look with care into the matter. Doubtless you have with you an abstract of the necessary documents, the conditions of the present mortgages, the rental of the estate, its probable prospects, and so forth."

"Sir, I have such an abstract with me at Paris; and having gone into it myself with M. Hébert, I can pledge you my word that it is strictly faithful to the facts."

The Marquis said this with *naive* simplicity, as if his word were quite sufficient to set that part of the question at rest.

M. Gandrin smiled politely and said, "*Eh bien*, M. le Marquis: favor me with the abstract; in a week's time you shall have my opinion. You enjoy Paris? Greatly improved under the Emperor. *A propos*, Madame Gandrin receives to-morrow evening; allow me that opportunity to present you to her."

Unprepared for the proffered hospitality, the Marquis had no option but to murmur his gratification and assent.

In a minute more he was in the streets. The next evening he went to Madame Gandrin's—a brilliant reception—a whole moving flowerbed of "decorations" there. Having gone through the ceremony of presentation to Madame Gandrin—a handsome woman dressed to perfection, and conversing with the secretary to an embassy—the young noble ensconced himself in an obscure and quiet cornor, obsering all, and imagining that he escaped observation. And as the young men of his own years glided by him, or as their talk reached his ears, he became aware that from top to toe, within and without, he was old-fashioned, obsolete, not of his race, not of his day. His rank itself seemed to him a waste-paper title-deed to a heritage long lapsed. Not thus the princely *seigneurs* of Rochebriant made their *début* at the capital of their nation. They had had the *entrée* to the cabinets of their kings; they had glittered in the halls of Versailles; they had held high posts of distinction in court and camp; the great Order of St. Louis had seemed their hereditary appanage. His

father, though a voluntary exile in manhood, had been in childhood a king's page, and throughout life remained the associate of princes; and here, in an *avoue's soirée*, unknown, unregarded, an expectant on an *avoue's* patronage, stood the last lord of Rochebriant.

It is easy to conceive that Alain did not stay long. But he stayed long enough to convince him that on £200 a-year the polite society of Paris, even as seen at M. Gandrin's, was not for him. Nevertheless, a day or two after, he resolved to call upon the nearest of his kinsmen to whom his aunt had given him letters. With the Count de Vandemar, one of his fellow-nobles of the sacred Faubourg, he should be no less Rochebriant, whether in a garret or a palace. The Vandemars, in fact, though for many generations before the First Revolution a puissant and brilliant family, had always recognized the Rochebriants as the head of their house—the trunk from which they had been slipped in the fifteenth century, when a younger son of the Rochebriants married a wealthy heiress and took the title, with the lands of Vandemar.

Since then the two families had often intermarried. The present count had a reputation for ability, was himself a large proprietor, and might furnish advice to guide Alain in his negotiations with M. Gandrin. The Hotel de Vandemar stood facing the old Hotel de Rochebriant; it was less spacious, but not less venerable, gloomy, and prison-like.

As he turned his eyes from the armorial scutcheon which still rested, though chipped and mouldering, over the portals of his lost ancestral house, and was about to cross the street, two youug men, who seemed two or three years older than himself, emerged on horseback from the Hotel de Vandemar.

Handsome young men, with the lofty look of the old race, dressed with the punctilious care of person which is not foppery in men of birth, but seems part of the self-respect that appertains to the old chivalric point of honor. The horse of one of these cavaliers made a caracole which brought it nearly upon Alain as he was about to cross. The rider, checking his steed, lifted his hat to Alain, and uttered a word of apology in the courtesy of ancient high-breeding, but still with condescension as to an inferior. This little incident, and the slighting kind of notice received from coevals of his own birth, and doubtless his own blood —for he divined truly that they were the sons of the Count de Vandemar—disconcerted Alain to a degree which perhaps a Frenchman alone can comprehend. He had even half a mind to give up his visit and turn back. However, his native manhood prevailed over that morbid sensitiveness which, born out of the union of pride and poverty, has all the effects of vanity, and yet is not vanity itself.

The Count was at home, a thin spare man, with a narrow but high forehead, and an expression of countenance keen, severe, and *un peu moqueuse*.

He received the Marquis, however, at first with great cordiality, kissed him on both sides of his cheek, called him "cousin," expressed immeasurable regret that the Countess was gone out on one of the missions of charity in which the great ladies of the Faubourg religiously interest themselves, and that his sons had just ridden forth to the Bois.

As Alain, however, proceeded, simply and without false shame, to communicate the object of his visit to Paris, the extent of his liabilities, and the penury of his means, the smile vanished from the Count's face; he somewhat drew back his *fauteuil* in the movement common to men who wish to estrange themselves from some other man's difficulties; and when Alain came to a close, the Count remained some moments seized with a slight cough; and gazing intently on the carpet, at length he said, "My dear young friend, your father behaved extremely ill to you—dishonorably, fraudulently."

"Hold!" said the Marquis, coloring high. "Those are words no man can apply to my father in my presence."

The Count stared, shrugged his shoulders, and replied with *sang froid*—

"Marquis, if you are contented with your father's conduct, of course it is no business of mine: he never injured me. I presume, however, that, considering my years and my character, you come to me for advice—is it so?"

Alain bowed his head in assent.

"There are four courses for one in your position to take," said the Count, placing the index of the right hand successively on the thumb and three fingers of the left—"four courses, and no more.

"First. To do as your notary recommended: consolidate your mortgages, patch up your income as you best can, return to Rochebriant, and devote the rest of your existence to the preservation of your property. By that course your life will be one of permanent privation, severe struggle; and the probability is that you will not succeed: there will come one or two bad seasons, the farmers will fail to pay, the mortgagee will foreclose, and you may find yourself, after twenty years of anxiety and torment, prematurely old and without a *sou*.

"Course the second. Rochebriant, though so heavily encumbered as to yield you some such income as your father gave to his *chef de cuisine*, is still one of those superb *terres* which bankers and Jews and stock-jobbers court and hunt after, for which they will give enormous sums. If you place it in good hands, I do not doubt that you could dispose of the property within three months, on terms that would leave you a considerable surplus, which, invested with judgment, would afford you whereon you could live at Paris in a way suitable to your rank and age.—Need we go further?—does this course smile to you?"

"Pass on, Count; I will defend to the last what I take from my ancestors, and cannot voluntarily sell their roof-tree and their tombs."

"Your name would still remain, and you would be just as well received in Paris, and your *noblesse* just as implicitly conceded, if all Judæ encamped upon Rochebriant. Consider how few of us *gentilshommes* of the old *régime* have any domains left to us. Our names alone survive; no revolution can efface *them*."

"It may be so, but pardon me; there are subjects on which we cannot reason—we can but feel. Rochebriant may be, torn from me, but I cannot yield it."

"I proceed to the third course. Keep the *château* and give up its traditions; remain *de facto* Marquis of Rochebriant, but accept the new order of things. Make yourself known to the people in power. They will be charmed to welcome you;—a convert from the old *noblesse* is a guarantee of stability to the new system. You will be placed in diplomacy; efflorescе into an ambassador, a minister—and minister nowadays have opportunities to become enormously rich."

"That course is not less impossible than the last. Till Henry V. formally resign his right to the throne of St. Louis, I can be servant to no other man seated on that throne."

"Such, too, is my creed," said the Count, "and I cling to it; but my estate is not mortgaged, and I have neither the tastes nor the age for public employments. The last course is perhaps better than the rest; at all events it is the easiest. A wealthy marriage; even if it must be a *mésalliance*. I think at your age, with your appearance, that your name is worth at least two million francs in the eyes of a rich *roturier* with an ambitious daughter."

"Alas!" said the young man, rising, "I see I shall have to go back to Rochebriant. I cannot sell my castle, I cannot sell my creed, and I cannot sell my name and myself."

"The last all of us did in the old *régime*, Marquis. Though I still retain the title of Vandemar, my property comes from the Farmer-General's daughter, whom my great-grandfather, happily for us, married in the days of Louis Quinze. Marriages with people of sense and rank have always been *mariages de convenance* in France. It is only in *le petit monde* that men having nothing marry girls having nothing, and I don't believe they are a bit the happier for it. On the contrary, the quarrels *de ménage* leading to frightful crimes appear by the '*Gazette des Tribunaux*' to be chiefly found among those who do not sell themselves at the altar."

The old Count said this with a grim *persiflage*. He was a Voltairian.

Voltairianism deserted by the modern Liberals of France has its chief cultivation nowadays among the wits of the old *régime*. They pick up its light weapons on the battlefield on which their fathers perished, and refeather against the *canaille* the shafts which had been pointed against the *noblesse*.

"Adieu, Count," said Alain, rising; "I do not thank you less for your advice because I have not the wit to profit by it."

"*Au revoir*, my cousin; you will think better of it when you have been a month or two at Paris. By the way, my wife receives every Wednesday; consider our house yours."

"Count, can I enter into the world which Madame la Comtesse receives, in the way that becomes my birth, on the income I take from my fortune?"

The Count hesitated. "No," said he at last, frankly; "not because you will be less welcome or less respected, but because I see that you have all the pride and sensitiveness of a *seigneur de province.* Society would therefore give you pain, not pleasure. More than this, I know by the remembrance of my own youth, and the sad experience of my own sons, that you would be irresistibly led into debt, and debt in your circumstances would be the loss of Rochebriant. No; I invite you to visit us. I offer you the most select but not the most brilliant circles of Paris, because my wife is religious, and frightens away the birds of gay plumage with the scarecrows of priests and bishops. But if you accept my invitation and my offer, I am bound, as an old man of the world to a young kinsman, to say that the chances are that you will be ruined."

"I thank you, Count, for your candor; and I acknowledge that I have found a relation and a guide," answered the Marquis, with a nobility of mien that was not without a pathos which touched the hard heart of the old man.

"Come at least whenever you want a sincere if a rude friend;" and though he did not kiss his cousin's cheek this time, he gave him, with more sincerity, a parting shake of the hand.

And these made the principal events in Alain's Paris life till he met Frederic Lemercier. Hitherto he had received no definite answer from M. Gandrin, who had postponed an interview, not having had leisure to make himself master of all the details in the abstract sent to him.

CHAPTER IV.

The next day, towards the afternoon, Frederic Lemercier, somewhat breathless from the rapidity at which he had ascended to so high an eminence, burst into Alain's chamber.

"*Pr-r! mon cher;* what superb exercise for the health—how it must strengthen the muscles and expand the chest! after this, who should shrink from scaling Mont Blanc?—Well, well. I have been meditating on your business ever since we parted. But I would fain know more of its details. You shall confide them to me as we drive through the Bois. My *coupé* is below, and the day is beautiful—come."

To the young Marquis, the gaiety, the heartiness of his college friend were a cordial. How different from the dry counsels of the Count de Vandemar! Hope, though vaguely, entered into his heart. Willingly he accepted Frederic's invitation, and the young men were soon rapidly borne along the Champs Elysées. As briefly as he could Alain described the state of his affairs, the nature of his mortgages, and the result of his interview with M. Gandrin.

Frederic listened attentively. "Then Gandrin has given you as yet no answer?"

"None; but I have a note from him this morning asking me to call to-morrow."

"After you have seen him decide on nothing—if he makes you any offer. Get back your abstract, or a copy of it, and confide it to me. Gandrin ought to help you; he transacts affairs in a large way. *Belle clientèle* among the *millionnaires.* But his clients expect fabulous profits, and so does he. As for your principal mortgagee, Louvier, you know of course, who he is."

"No, except that M. Hébert told me that he was very rich."

"Rich! I should think so; one of the Kings of Finance. Ah! observe those young men on horseback."

Alain looked forth and recognized the two cavaliers whom he had conjectured to be the sons of the Count de Vandemar.

"Those *beaux garçons* are fair specimens of your Faubourg," said Frederic; "they would decline my acquaintance because my grandfather kept a shop, and they keep a shop between them."

"A shop! I am mistaken, then. Who are they?"

"Raoul and Enguerrand, sons of that mocker of man, the Count de Vandemar."

"And they keep a shop! you are jesting."

"A shop at which you may buy gloves and perfumes, Rue de de la Chaussée d'Antin, Of course they don't serve at the counter; they only invest their pocket-money in the speculation, and in so doing—treble at least their pocket-money, buy their horses, and keep their grooms."

"Is it possible! nobles of such birth! How shocked the Count would be if he knew it!"

"Yes, very much shocked if he was supposed to know it. But he is too wise a father

not to give his sons limited allowances and unlimited liberty, especially the liberty to add to the allowances as they please. Look again at them; no better riders and more affectionate brothers since the date of Castor and Pollux. Their tastes indeed differ; Raoul is religious and moral, melancholy and dignified; Enguerrand is a lion of the first water,—*élégant* to the tips of his nails. These demigods are nevertheless very mild to mortals. Though Enguerrand is the best pistol-shot in Paris, and Raoul the best fencer, the first is so good-tempered that you would be a brute to quarrel with him, the last so true a Catholic, that if you quarrelled with him you need fear not his sword. He would not die in the committal of what the Church holds a mortal sin."

"Are you speaking ironically? Do you mean to imply that men of the name of Vandemar are not brave?"

"On the contrary, I believe that, though masters of their weapons, they are too brave to abuse their skill; and I must add, that though they are sleeping partners in a shop, they would not cheat you of a farthing.—Benign stars on earth, as Castor and Pollux were in heaven."

"But partners in a shop!"

"Bah! when a minister himself, like the late M. de M——, kept a shop, and added the profits of *bon bons* to his revenue, you may form some idea of the spirit of the age. If young nobles are not generally sleeping partners in shops, still they are more or less adventurers in commerce. The *Bourse* is the profession of those who have no other profession. You have visited the *Bourse?*"

"No."

"No! this is just the hour. We have time yet for the Bois.—Coachman, drive to the *Bourse*."

"The fact is," resumed Frederic, "that gambling is one of the wants of civilized men. The *rouge et noir* and *roulette* tables are forbidden—the hells closed; but the passion for making money without working for it must have its vent, and that vent is the *Bourse*. As instead of a hundred wax-lights you now have one jet of gas, so instead of a hundred hells you have now one *Bourse*, and—it is exceedingly convenient; always at hand; no discredit being seen there as it was to be seen at Frascati's—on the contrary, at once respectable, and yet the *mode*."

The *coupé* stops at the *Bourse*, our friends mount the steps, glide through the pillars, deposit their canes at a place destined to guard them, and the Marquis follows Frederic up a flight of stairs till he gains the open gallery round a vast hall below. Such a din! such a clamor! disputations, wrangling, wrathful.

Here Lemercier distinguished some friends, whom he joined for a few minutes.

Alain, left alone, looked down into the hall. He thought himself in some stormy scene of the First Revolution. An English contested election in the market-place of a borough when the candidates are running close on each other, the result doubtful, passions excited, the whole borough in civil war, is peaceful compared to the scene at the *Bourse*.

Bulls and bears screaming, bawling, gesticulating, as if one were about to strangle the other; the whole, to an uninitiated eye, a confusion, a Babel, which it seems absolutely impossible to reconcile to the notion of quiet mercantile transactions, the purchase and sale of shares and stocks. As Alain gazed bewildered, he felt himself gently touched, and, looking round, saw the Englishman.

"A lively scene!" whispered Mr. Vane. "This is the heart of Paris: it beats very loudly."

"Is your *Bourse* in London like this?"

"I cannot tell you; at our Exchange the general public are not admitted; the privileged priests of that temple sacrifice their victims in closed penetralia, beyond which the sounds made in the operation do not travel to ears profane. But had we an Exchange like this open to all the world, and placed, not in a region of our metropolis unknown to fashion, but in some elegant square in St. James's or at Hyde Park Corner, I suspect that our national character would soon undergo a great change, and that all our idlers and sporting-men would make their books there every day, instead of waiting long months in *ennui* for the Doncaster and the Derby. At present we have but few men on the turf; we should then have few men not on Exchange, especially if we adopt your law, and can contrive to be traders without risk of becoming bankrupts. Napoleon I. called us a shopkeeping nation. Napoleon III. has taught France to excel us in everything, and certainly he has made Paris a shopkeeping city."

Alain thought of Raoul and Enguerrand, and blushed to find that what he considered a blot on his countrymen was so familiarly perceptable to a foreigner's eye.

"And the Emperor has done wisely, at least for the time," continued the Englishman, with a more thoughtful accent. "He has found vent thus for that very dangerous class in Paris society to which the subdivision of property gave birth—viz., the crowd of well-born, daring young men without fortune and without profession. He has opened the *Bourse* and said, 'There, I will give you employment, resource, an *avenir*.' He has cleared the by-ways into commerce and trade, and opened new avenues of wealth to the *noblesse*, whom the great revolution so unwisely beggared. What other way to rebuild a *noblesse* in France, and give it a chance of power because an access to fortune? But to how many sides of your national character has the *Bourse* of Paris magnetic attraction! You Frenchmen are so brave that you could not be happy without facing danger, so covetous of distinction that you would pine yourself away without a dash, *coûte que coûte*, at celebrity and a red ribbon. Danger! look below at that arena—there it is; danger daily, hourly. But there also is celebrity; win at the *Bourse*, as of old, in a tournament, and paladins smile on you, and ladies give you their scarves, or, what is much the same, they allow you to buy their *cachemires*. Win at the *Bourse*—what follows? the Chamber, the Senate, the Cross, the Minister's *portefeuille*. I might rejoice in all this for the sake of Europe—could it last, and did it not bring the consequences that follow the demoralization which attends it. The *Bourse* and the *Crédit Mobilier* keep Paris quiet—at least as quiet as it can be. These are the secrets of this reign of splendor; these the two *lions couchants* on which rests the throne of the Imperial reconstructor."

Alain listened surprised and struck. He had not given the Englishman credit for the cast of mind which such reflections evinced.

Here Lemercier rejoined them, and shook hands with Graham Vane, who, taking him aside, said, "But you promised to go to the Bois, and indulge my insane curiosity about the lady in the pearl-colored robe?"

"I have not forgotten; it is not half-past two yet; you said three. *Soyez tranquille;* I drive thither from the *Bourse* with Rochebriant."

"Is it necessary to take with you that very good-looking Marquis?"

"I thought you said you were not jealous, because not yet in love. However, if Rochebriant occasions you the pang which your humble servant failed to inflict, I will take care that he do not see the lady."

"No," said the Englishman; "on consideration, I should be very much obliged to any one with whom she would fall in love. That would disenchant me. Take the Marquis by all means."

Meanwhile Alain, again looking down, saw just under him, close by one of the pillars, Lucien Duplessis. He was standing apart from the throng—a small space cleared round himself—and two men who had the air of gentlemen of the *beau monde*, with whom he was conferring. Duplessis, thus seen, was not like the Duplessis at the *restaurant*. It would be difficult to explain what the change was, but it forcibly struck Alain: the air was more dignified, the expression keener; there was a look of conscious power and command about the man even at that distance; the intense, concentrated intelligence of his eye, his firm lip, his marked features, his projecting, massive brow,—would have impressed a very ordinary observer. In fact, the man was here in his native element—in the field in which his intellect gloried, commanded, and had signalized itself by successive triumphs. Just thus may be the change in the great orator whom you deemed insignificant in a drawing-room, when you see his crest rise above a reverential audience; or the great soldier, who was not distinguishable from the subaltern in a peaceful club, could you see him issuing the order to his aides-de-camp amidst the smoke and roar of the battle-field.

"Ah, Marquis!" said Graham Vane, "are you gazing at Duplessis? He is the modern genius of Paris. He is at once the Cousin, the Guizot, and the Victor Hugo of speculation. Philosophy—Eloquence—audacious Romance; all Literature now is swallowed up in the sublime epic of *Agiotage*, and Duplessis is the poet of the Empire."

"Well said, M. Grarm Varn," cried Frederic, forgetting his recent lesson in English names. "Alain underrates that great man.

How could an Englishman appreciate him so well."

"*Ma foi!*" returned Graham, quietly: "I am studying to think at Paris, in order some day or other to know how to act in London. Time for the Bois. Lemercier, we meet at seven—Philippe's."

CHAPTER V.

"WHAT do you think of the *Bourse?*" asked Lemercier, as their carriage took the way to the Bois.

"I cannot think of it yet; I am stunned. It seems to me as if I had been at a *Sabbat*, of which the wizards were *agents de change*, but not less bent upon raising Satan."

"Pooh! the best way to exorcise Satan is to get rich enough not to be tempted by him. The fiend always loved to haunt empty places; and of all places nowadays he prefers empty purses and empty stomachs."

"But do all people get rich at the *Bourse?* or is not one man's wealth many men's ruin?"

"That is a question not very easy to answer; but under our present system Paris gets rich, though at the expense of individual Parisians. I will try and explain. The average luxury is enormously increased even in my experience; what were once considered refinement and fopperies are now called necessary comforts. Prices are risen enormously,—house-rent doubled within the last five or six years; all articles of luxury are very much dearer; the very gloves I wear cost twenty per cent. more than I used to pay for gloves of the same quality. How the people we meet live, and live so well, is an enigma that would defy Œdipus if Œdipus were not a Parisian. But the main explanation is this: speculation and commerce, with the facilities given to all investments, have really opened more numerous and more rapid ways to fortune than were known a few years ago.

Crowds are thus attracted to Paris, resolved to venture a small capital in the hope of a large one; they live on that capital, not on their income, as gamesters do. There is an idea among us that it is necessary to seem rich in order to become rich. Thus there is a general extravagance and profusion. English *milords* marvel at our splendor. Those who, while spending their capital as their income, fail in their schemes of fortune, after one, two, three, or four years—vanish. What becomes of them, I know no more than I do what becomes of the old moons. Their place is immediately supplied by new candidates. Paris is thus kept perennially sumptuous and splendid by the gold it engulfs. But then some men succeed — succeed prodigiously, preternaturally; they make colossal fortunes, which are magnificently expended. They set an example of show and pomp, which is of course the more contagious because so many men say, 'The other day those *millionnaires* were as poor as we are; they never economized; why should we?' Paris is thus doubly enriched—by the fortunes it swallows up, and by the fortunes it casts up; the last being always reproductive, and the first never lost except to the individuals."

"I understand: but what struck me forcibly at the scene we have left was the number of young men there; young men whom I should judge by their appearance to be gentlemen, evidently not mere spectators—eager, anxious, with tablets in their hands. That old or middle-aged men should find a zest in the pursuit of gain I can understand, but youth and avarice seems to me a new combination, which Molière never divined in his 'Avare.'"

"Young men, especially if young gentlemen, love pleasure; and pleasure in this city is very dear. This explains why so many young men frequent the *Bourse*. In the old gaming-tables now suppressed, young men were the majority; in the days of your chivalrous forefathers it was the young nobles, not the old, who would stake their very mantles and swords on a cast of the die. And, naturally enough, *mon cher;* for is not youth the season of hope, and is not hope the goddess of gaming, whether at *rouge et noir* or the *Bourse?*"

Alain felt himself more and more behind his generation. The acute reasoning of Lemercier humbled his *amour propre*. At College Lemercier was never considered Alain's equal in ability or book-learning. What a stride beyond his schoolfellow had Lemercier now made! How dull and stupid the young provincial felt himself to be as compared with

the easy cleverness and half-sportive philosophy of the Parisian's fluent talk!

He sighed with a melancholy and yet with a generous envy. He had too fine a natural perception not to acknowledge that there is a rank of mind as well as of birth, and in the first he felt that Lemercier might well walk before a Rochebriant; but his very humility was a proof that he underrated himself.

Lemercier did not excel him in mind, but in experience. And just as the drilled soldier seems a much finer fellow than the raw recruit, because he knows how to carry himself, but after a year's discipline the raw recruit may exel in martial air the upright hero whom he now despairingly admires, and never dreams he can rival; so set a mind from a village into the drill of a capital, and see it a year after; it may tower a head higher than its recruiting-sergeant.

CHAPTER VI.

"I BELIEVE," said Lemercier, as the *coupé* rolled through the lively alleys of the Bois de Boulogne, "that Paris is built on a loadstone, and that every Frenchman with some iron globules in his blood is irresistibly attracted towards it. The English never seem to feel for London the passionate devotion that we feel for Paris. On the contrary, the London middle class, the commercialists, the shopkeepers, the clerks, even the superior artisans compelled to do their business in the capital, seem always scheming and pining to have their home out of it, though but in a suburb."

"You have been in London, Frederic?"

"Of course; it is the *mode* to visit that dull and hideous metropolis."

"If it be dull and hideous, no wonder the people who are compelled to do business in it seek the pleasures of home out of it."

"It is very droll that though the middle class entirely govern the melancholy Albion, it is the only country in Europe in which the middle class seem to have no amusements; nay, they legislate against amusement. They have no leisure-day but Sunday; and on that day they close all their theatres—even their museums and picture-galleries. What amusements there may be in England are for the higher classes and the lowest."

"What are the amusements of the lowest class?"

"Getting drunk."

"Nothing else?"

"Yes. I was taken at night under protection of a policeman to some *cabarets*, where I found crowds of that class which is the stratum below the working class; lads who sweep crossings and hold horses, mendicants, and, I was told, thieves, girls whom a servant-maid would not speak to—very merry—dancing quadrilles and waltzes, and regaling themselves on sausages—the happiest-looking folks I found in all London—and, I must say, conducting themselves very decently."

"Ah!" Here Lemercier pulled the check-string. "Will you object to a walk in this quiet alley? I see some one whom I have promised the Englishman to—— But heed me, Alain; don't fail in love with her."

CHAPTER VII.

THE lady in the pearl-colored dress! Certainly it was a face that might well arrest the eye and linger long on the remembrance.

There are certain "beauty-women" as there are certain "beauty-men," in whose features one detects no fault—who are the show figures of any assembly in which they appear—but who, somehow or other, inspire no sentiment and excite no interest; they lack some expression, whether of mind, or of soul or of heart, without which the most beautiful face is but a beautiful picture. This lady was not one of those "beauty-women." Her features taken singly were by no means perfect, nor were they set off by any brilliancy of coloring. But the countenance aroused and impressed the imagination with a belief that there was some history attached to it which you longed to learn. The hair, simply parted over a forehead unusually spacious and high for a woman, was of lustrous darkness; the eyes, of a deep violet blue, were shaded with long lashes.

Their expression was soft and mournful, but unobservant. She did not notice Alain and Lemercier as the two men slowly passed her. She seemed abstracted, gazing into space as one absorbed in thought or reverie. Her complexion was clear and pale, and apparently betokened delicate health.

Lemercier seated himself on a bench beside the path, and invited Alain to do the same. "She will return this way soon," said the Parisian, "and we can observe her more attentively and more respectfully thus seated than if we were on foot; meanwhile, what do you think of her? Is she French?—is she Italian?—can she be English?"

"I should have guessed Italian, judging by the darkness of the hair and the outline of the features? but do Italians have so delicate a fairness of complexion?"

"Very rarely; and I should guess her to be French, judging by the intelligence of her expression, the simple neatness of her dress, and by that nameless refinement of air in which a Parisienne excels all the descendants of Eve—if it were not for her eyes. I never saw a Frenchwoman with eyes of that peculiar shade of blue; and if a Frenchwoman had such eyes, I flatter myself she would have scarcely allowed us to pass without making some use of them."

"Do you think she is married?" asked Alain.

"I hope so—for a girl of her age, if *comme il faut*, can scarcely walk alone in the Bois, and would not have acquired that look so intelligent—more than intelligent—so poetic."

"But regard that air of unmistakable distinction, regard that expression of face—so pure, so virginal: *comme il faut* she must be."

As Alain said these last words, the lady, who had turned back, was approaching them, and in full view of their gaze. She seemed unconscious of their existence as before, and Lemercier noticed that her lips moved as if she were murmuring inaudibly to herself.

She did not return again, but continued her walk straight on till at the end of the alley she entered a carriage in waiting for her, and was driven off.

"Quick, quick!" cried Lemercier, running towards his own *coupé;* "we must give chase."

Alain followed somewhat less hurriedly, and, agreeably to instructions Lemercier had already given to his coachman, the Parisian's *coupé* set off at full speed in the track of the strange lady's, which was still in sight.

In less than twenty minutes the carriage in chase stopped at the *grille* of one of those charming little villas to be found in the pleasant suburb of A——; a porter emerged from the lodge, opened the gate; the carriage drove in, again stopped at the door of the house, and the two gentlemen could not catch even a glimpse of the lady's robe as she descended from the carriage and disappeared within the house.

"I see a *café* yonder," said Lemercier; "let us learn all we can as to the fair unknown, over a *sorbet* or a *petit verre.*"

Alain silently, but not reluctantly, consented. He felt in the fair stranger an interest new to his existence.

They entered the little *café*, and in a few minutes Lemercier, with the easy *savoir vivre* of a Parisian, had extracted from the *garçon* as much as probably any one in the neighborhood knew of the inhabitants of the villa.

It had been hired and furnished about two months previously in the name of Signora Venosta; but according to the report of the servants, that lady appeared to be the *gouvernante* or guardian of a lady much younger, out of whose income the villa was rented and the household maintained.

It was for her the *coupé* was hired from Paris. The elder lady very rarely stirred out during the day, but always accompanied the younger in any evening visits to the theatre or the houses of friends.

It was only within the last few weeks that such visits had been made.

The younger lady was in delicate health, and under the care of an English physician famous for skill in the treatment of pulmonary complaints. It was by his advice that she took daily walking exercise in the Bois. The establishment consisted of three servants, all Italians, and speaking but imperfect French. The *garçon* did not know whether either of the ladies was married, but their mode of life was free from all scandal or suspicion; they probably belonged to the literary or musical world, as the *garçon* had observed as their visitors the eminent author M. Savarin and his wife; and, still more frequently, an old man not less eminent as a musical composer.

"It is clear to me now," said Lemercier, as the two friends reseated themselves in the carriage, "that our pearly *ange* is some Italian singer of repute enough in her own country to have gained already a competence; and that perhaps on account of her own health or her friend's, she is living quietly here in the expec-

tation of some professional engagement, or the absence of some foreign lover."

"Lover! do you think that?" exclaimed Alain, in a tone of voice that betrayed pain.

"It is possible enough; and in that case the Englishman may profit little by the information I have promised to give him."

"You have promised the Englishman?"

"Do you not remember last night that he described the lady, and said that her face haunted him: and I——"

"Ah! I remember now. What do you know of this Englishman? He is rich, I suppose."

"Yes, I hear he is very rich now; that an uncle lately left him an enormous sum of money. He was attached to the English Embassy many years ago, which accounts for his good French and his knowledge of Parisian life. He comes to Paris very often, and I have known him some time. Indeed he has intrusted to me a difficult and delicate commission. The English tell me that his father was one of the most eminent members of their Parliament, of ancient birth, very highly connected, but ran out his fortune and died poor; that our friend had for some years to maintain himself, I fancy, by his pen; that he is considered very able; and, now that his uncle has enriched him, likely to enter public life and run a career as distinguished as his father's."

"Happy man! happy are the English," said the Marquis, with a sigh: and as the carriage now entered Paris, he pleaded the excuse of an engagement, bade his friend good-bye, and went his way musing through the crowded streets.

CHAPTER VIII.

Letter from Isaura Cicogna to Madame de Grantmesnil.

VILLA D'——, *A* . . . .

I CAN never express to you, my beloved Eulalie, the strange charm which a letter from you throws over my poor little lonely world for days after it is received. There is always in it something that comforts, something that sustains, but also a something that troubles and disquiets me. I suppose Goethe is right, "that it is the property of true genius to disturb all settled ideas," in order, no doubt, to lift them into a higher level when they settle down again.

Your sketch of the new work you are meditating amid the orange groves of Provence interests me intensely; yet, do you forgive me when I add that the interest is not without terror. I do not find myself able to comprehend how, amid those lovely scenes of nature, your mind voluntarily surrounds itself with images of pain and discord. I stand in awe of the calm with which you subject to your analysis the infirmities of reason and the tumults of passion. And all those laws of the social state which seem to be fixed and immovable you treat with so quiet a scorn, as if they were but the gossamer threads which a touch of your slight woman's hand could brush away. But I cannot venture to discuss such subjects with you. It is only the skilled enchanter who can stand safely in the magic circle, and compel the spirits that he summons, even if they are evil, to minister to ends in which he foresees a good.

We continue to live here very quietly, and I do not as yet feel the worse for the colder climate. Indeed, my wonderful doctor, who was recommended to me as American, but is in reality English, assures me that a single winter spent here under his care will suffice for my complete re-establishment. Yet that career, to the training for which so many years have been devoted, does not seem to me so alluring as it once did.

I have much to say on this subject, which I defer till I can better collect my own thoughts on it—at present they are confused and struggling. The great *Maestro* has been most gracious.

In what a radiant atmosphere his genius lives and breathes! Even in his cynical moods, his very cynicism has in it the ring of the jocund music—the laugh of Figaro, not of Mephistopheles.

We went to dine with him last week; he invited to meet us Madame S——, who has this year conquered all opposition, and reigns alone, the great S——. Mr. T——, a pianist of admirable promise—your friend, M. Savarin, wit, critic, and poet, with his pleasant sensible wife, and a few others who the *Maestro* confided to me in a whisper, were authorities in the

press. After dinner S—— sang to us, magnificently, of course. Then she herself graciously turned to me, said how much she had heard from the *Maestro* in my praise, and so-and-so I was persuaded to sing after her. I need not say to what disadvantage. But I forgot my nervousness; I forgot my audience; I forgot myself, as I always do when once my soul, as it were, finds wing in music, and buoys itself in air, relieved from the sense of earth. I knew not that I had succeeded till I came to a close, and then my eyes resting on the face of the grand *prima donna*, I was seized with an indescribable sadness—with a keen pang of remorse. Perfect *artiste* though she be, and with powers in her own realm of art which admit of no living equal, I saw at once that I had pained her; she had grown almost livid; her lips were quivering, and it was only with a great effort that she muttered out some faint words intended for applause. I comprehended by an instinct how gradually there can grow upon the mind of an artist the most generous that jealousy which makes the fear of a rival annihilate the delight in art. If ever I should achieve S——'s fame as a singer, should I feel the same jealousy? I think not now, but I have not been tested. She went away abruptly. I spare you the recital of the compliments paid to me by my other auditors, compliments that gave me no pleasure; for on all lips, except those of the *Maestro*, they implied, as the height of eulogy, that I had inflicted torture upon S——. "If so," said he, "she would be as foolish as a rose that was jealous of the whiteness of a lily. You would do yourself great wrong, my child, if you tried to vie with the rose in its own color."

He patted my bended head as he spoke, with that kind of fatherly king-like fondness with which he honors me; and I took his hand in mine and kissed it gratefully. "Nevertheless," said Savarin, "when the lily comes out there will be a furious attack on it, made by the clique that devotes itself to the rose: a lily clique will be formnd *en revanche*, and I foresee a fierce paper war. Do not be frightened at its first outburst; every fame worth having must be fought for."

Is it so? have you had to fight for your fame, Eulalie? and do you hate all contests as much as I do?

Our only other gaiety since I last wrote was a *soirée* at M. Louvier's. That republican *millionnaire* was not slow in attending to the kind letter you addressed to him recommending us to his civilities. He called at once, placed his good offices at our disposal, took charge of my modest fortune, which he has invested, no doubt, as safely as it is advantageously in point of interest, hired our carriage for us, and in short has been most amiably useful.

At his house we met many to me most pleasant, for they spoke with such genuine appreciation of your works and yourself. But there were others whom I should never have expected to meet under the roof of a Crœsus who has so great a stake in the order of things established. One young man—a noble whom he specially presented to me, as a politician who would be at the head of affairs when the Red Republic was established—asked me whether I did not agree with him that all private property was public spoliation, and that the great enemy to civilization was religion, no matter in what form.

He addressed to me these tremendous questions with an effeminate lisp, and harangued on them with small feeble gesticulations of pale dainty fingers covered with rings.

I asked him if there were many who in France shared his ideas.

"Quite enough to carry them some day," he answered, with a lofty smile. "And the day may be nearer than the world thinks, when my *confrères* will be so numerous that they will have to shoot down each other for the sake of cheese to their bread."

That day nearer than the world thinks! Certainly, so far as one may judge the outward signs of the world at Paris, it does not think of such things at all. With what an air of self-content the beautiful city parades her riches! Who can gaze on her splendid palaces, her gorgeous shops, and believe that she will give ear to doctrines that would annihilate private rights of property; or who can enter her crowded churches and dream that she can ever again install a republic too civilized for religion?

Adieu. Excuse me for this dull letter. If I have written on much that has little interest even for me, it is that I wish to distract my mind from brooding over the question that interests me most, and on which I most need

your counsel. I will try to approach it in my next.

ISAURA.

From the Same to the Same.

Eulalie, Eulalie!—What mocking spirit has been permitted in this modern age of ours to place in the heart of woman the ambition which is the prerogative of men?—You indeed, so richly endowed with a man's genius, have a right to man's aspirations. But what can justify such ambition in me? Nothing but this one unintellectual perishable gift of a voice that does but please in uttering the thoughts of others. Doubtless I could make a name familiar for its brief time to the talk of Europe—a name, what name? a singer's name. Once I thought that name a glory. Shall I ever forget the day when you first shone upon me; when, emerging from childhood as from a dim and solitary bypath, I stood forlorn on the great thoroughfare of life, and all the prospects before me stretched sad in mists and in rain? You beamed on me then as the sun coming out from the cloud and changing the face of earth; you opened to my sight the fairy-land of poetry and art; you took me by the hand and said, "Courage! there is at each step some green gap in the hedgerows, some soft escape from the stony thoroughfare. Beside the real life expands the ideal life to to those who seek it. Droop not, seek it; the ideal life has its sorrows, but it never admits despair; as on the ear of him who follows the winding course of a stream, the stream ever varies the note of its music, now loud with the rush of the falls; now low and calm as it glides by the level marge of smooth banks; now sighing through the stir of the reeds; now babbling with a fretful joy as some sudden curve on the shore stays its flight among gleaming pebbles;—so to the soul of the artist is the voice of the art ever fleeting beside and before him. Nature gave thee the bird's gift of song—raise the gift into art, and make the art thy companion.

"Art and Hope were twin-born, and they die together."

See how faithfully I remember, methinks, your very words. But the magic of the words, which I then but dimly understood, was in your smile and in your eye, and the queen-like wave of your hand as if beckoning to a world which lay before you, visible and familiar as your native land. And how devotedly, with what earnestness of passion, I gave myself up to the task of raising my gift into an art! I thought of nothing else, dreamed of nothing else; and oh, how sweet to me then were words of praise! "Another year yet," at length said the masters, "and you ascend your throne among the queens of song." Then—then—I would have changed for no other throne on earth my hope of that to be achieved in the realms of my art. And then came that long fever: my strength broke down, and the *Maestro* said, "Rest, or your voice is gone, and your throne is lost for ever." How hateful that rest seemed to me! You again came to my aid. You said, "The time you think lost should be but time improved. Penetrate your mind with other songs than the trash of *Libretti*. The more you habituate yourself to the forms, the more you imbue yourself with the spirit, in which passsions have been expressed and character delineated by great writers, the more completely you will accomplish yourself in your own special art of singer and actress." So, then, you allured me to a new study. Ah! in so doing did you dream that you diverted me from the old ambition? My knowledge of French and Italian, and my rearing in childhood, which had made English familiar to me, gave me the keys to the treasure-houses of three languages. Naturally I began with that in which your masterpieces are composed.

Till then I had not even read your works. They were the first I chose. How they impressed, how they startled me! what depths in the mind of man, in the heart of woman, they revealed to me! But I owned to you then, and I repeat it now, neither they nor any of the works in romance and poetry which form the boast of recent French literature, satisfied yearnings for that calm sense of beauty, that divine joy in a world beyond this world, which you had led me to believe it was the prerogative of ideal art to bestow. And when I told you this with the rude frankness you had bid me exercise in talk with you, a thoughtful melancholy shade fell over your face, and you said quietly, "You are right, child; we, the French of our time, are the offspring of revolutions that settled nothing, unsettled all: we resemble those troubled States

which rush into war abroad in order to re-establish peace at home. Our books suggest problems to men for reconstructing some social system in which the calm that belongs to art may be found at last: but such books should not be in your hands; they are not for the innocence and youth of women, as yet unchanged by the systems which exist." And the next day you brought me Tasso's great poem, the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, and said, smiling, "Art in its calm is here."

You remember that I was then at Sorrento by the order of my physician. Never shall I forget the soft autumn day when I sat amongst the lonely rocklets to the left of the town—the sea before me, with scarce a ripple; my very heart steeped in the melodies of that poem, so marvellous for a strength disguised in sweetness, and for a symmetry in which each proportion blends into the other with the perfectness of a Grecian statue. The whole place seemed to me filled with the presence of the poet to whom it had given birth. Certainly the reading of that poem formed an era in my existence; to this day I cannot acknowledge the faults or weaknesses which your criticisms pointed out—I believe because they are in unison with my own nature, which yearns for harmony, and, finding that, rests contented. I shrink from violent contrasts, and can discover nothing tame and insipid in a continuance of sweetness and serenity. But it was not till after I had read *La Gerusalemme* again and again, and then sat and brooded over it, that I recognized the main charm of the poem in the religion with clings to it as the perfume clings to a flower—a religion sometimes melancholy, but never to me sad. Hope always pervades it. Surely if, as you said, "Hope is twin-born with art," it is because art at its highest blends itself unconsciously with religion, and proclaims its affinity with hope by its faith in some future good more perfect than it has realized in the past.

Be this as it may, it was in this poem so pre-eminently Christian that I found the something which I missed and craved for in modern French masterpieces, even yours—a something spiritual, speaking to my own soul, calling it forth; distinguishing it as an essence apart from mere human reason; soothing, even when it excited; making earth nearer to heaven. And when I ran on in this strain to you after my own wild fashion, you took my head between your hands and kissed me, and said, "Happy are those who believe! long may that happiness be thine!" Why did I not feel in Dante the Christian charm that I felt in Tasso? Dante in your eyes, as in those of most judges, is infinitely the greater genius, but reflected on the dark stream of that genius the stars are so troubled, the heavens so threatening.

Just as my year of holiday was expiring, I turned to English literature; and Shakespeare, of course, was the first English poet put into my hands. It proves how childlike my mind still was, that my earliest sensation in reading him was that of disappointment. It was not only that, despite my familiarity with English (thanks chiefly to the care of him whom I call my second father), there is much in the metaphorical diction of Shakespeare which I failed to comprehend; but he seemed to me so far like the modern French writers who affect to have found inspiration in his muse, that he obtrudes images of pain and suffering without cause or motive sufficiently clear to ordinary understandings, as I had taught myself to think it ought to be in the drama.

He makes Fate so cruel that we lose sight of the mild deity behind her. Compare, in this, Corneille's "*Polyeucte*," with the "Hamlet." In the first an equal calamity befalls the good, but in their calamity they are blessed The death of the martyr is the triumph of his creed. But when we have put down the English tragedy—when Hamlet and Ophelia are confounded in death with Polonius and the fratricidal king, we see not what good end for humanity is achieved. The passages that fasten on our memory do not make us happier and holier; they suggest but terrible problems, to which they give us no solution.

In the "*Horaces*" of Corneille there are fierce contests, rude passions, tears drawn from some of the bitterest sources of human pity; but then through all stands out, large and visible to the eyes of all spectators, the great ideal of devoted patriotism. How much of all that has been grandest in the life of France, redeeming even its worst crimes of revolution in the love of country, has had its origin in the "*Horaces*" of Corneille? But I doubt if the fates of Coriolanus, and Cæsar, and Brutus, and Antony, in the giant tragedies

of Shakespeare, have made Englishmen more willing to die for England. In fine, it was long before—I will not say I understood or rightly appreciated Shakespeare, for no Englishman would admit that I or even you could ever do so,—but before I could recognize the justice of the place his country claims for him as the genius without an equal in the literature of Europe. Meanwhile the ardor I had put into study, and the wear and tear of the emotions which the study called forth, made themselves felt in a return of my former illness, with symptoms still more alarming; and when the year was out I was ordained to rest for perhaps another year before I could sing in public, still less appear on the stage. How I rejoiced when I heard that fiat! for I emerged from that year of study with a heart utterly estranged from the profession in which I had centred my hopes before ——. Yes, Eulalie, you had bid me accomplish myself for the arts of utterance by the study of arts in which thoughts originate the words they employ; and in doing so—I had changed myself into another being. I was forbidden all fatigue of mind; my books were banished, but not the new self which the books had formed. Recovering slowly through the summer, I came hither two months since, ostensibly for the advice of Dr. C——, but really in the desire to commune with my own heart, and be still.

And now I have poured forth that heart to you—would you persuade me still to be a singer? If you do, remember at least how jealous and absorbing the art of the singer and of the actress is. How completely I must surrender myself to it, and live among books, or among dreams, no more. Can I be anything else but singer? and if not, should I be contented merely to read and to dream?

I must confide to you one ambition which during the lazy Italian summer took possession of me—I must tell you the ambition, and add that I have renounced it as a vain one. I had hoped that I could compose, I mean in music. I was pleased with some things I did—they expressed in music what I could not express in words; and one secret object in coming here was to submit them to the great *Maestro*. He listened to them patiently; he complimented me on my accuracy in the mechanical laws of composition; he even said that my favorite airs were "*touchants et gracieux*."

And so he would have left me, but I stopped him timidly, and said, "Tell me frankly, do you think that with time and study, I could compose music such as singers equal to myself would sing to?"

"You mean as a professional composer?"

"Well, yes."

"And to the abandonment af your vocation as a singer?"

"Yes."

"My dear child, I should be your worst enemy if encouraged such a notion; cling to the career in which you can be greatest; gain but health, and I wager my reputation on your glorious success on the stage. What can you be as a composer? You will set pretty music to pretty words, and will be sung in drawing-rooms with the fame a little more or less that generally attends the compositions of female amateurs. Aim at something higher, as I know you would do, and you will not succeed. Is there any instance in modern times, perhaps in any times, of a female composer who attains even to the eminence of a third-rate opera writer? Composition in letters may be of no sex. In that Madame Dudevant and your friend Madame de Grantmesnil can beat most men; but the genius of musical composition is *homme*, and accept it as a compliment when I say that you are essentially *femme*."

He left me, of course, mortified and humbled; but I feel he is right as regards myself, though whether in his depreciation of our whole sex I cannot say. But as this hope has left me, I have become more disquieted, still more restless. Counsel me, Eulalie; counsel, and, if possible, comfort me.

ISAURA.

From the Same to the Same.

No letter from you yet, and I have left you in peace for ten days. How do you think I have spent them? The *Maestro* called on us with Mr. Savarin, to insist on our accompanying them on a round of the theatres. I had not been to one since my arrival. I divined that the kindhearted composer had a motive in this invitation. He thought that in witnessing the applauses bestowed on actors, and sharing in the fascination in which theatrical illusion holds an audience, my old passion for the stage, and with it the longing for an *artiste's* fame, would revive.

In my heart I wished that his expectations might be realized. Well for me if I could once more concentre all my aspirations on a prize within my reach !

We went first to see a comedy greatly in vogue, and the author thoroughly understands the French stage of our day. The acting was excellent in its way. The next night we went to the *Odéon*, a romantic melodrama in six acts, and I know not how many *tableux*. I found no fault with the acting there. I do not give you the rest of our programme. We visited all the principal theatres, reserving the opera and Madame S—— for the last. Before I speak of the opera, let me say a word or two on the plays.

There is no country in which the theatre has so great a hold on the public as in France; no country in which the successful dramatist has so high a fame; no country perhaps in which the state of the stage so faithfully represents the moral and intellectual condition of the people. I say this not, of course, from my experience of countries which I have not visited, but from all I hear of the stage in Germany and in England.

The impression left on my mind by the performances I witnessed is, that the French people are becoming dwarfed. The comedies that please them are but pleasant caricatures of petty sections in a corrupt society. They contain no large types of human nature; their witticisms convey no luminous flashes of truth; their sentiment is not pure and noble—it is a sickly and false perversion of the impure and ignoble into travesties of the pure and noble.

Their melodramas cannot be classed as literature—all that really remains of the old French genius is its *vaudeville*.

Great dramatists create great parts. One great part, such as a Rachel would gladly have accepted, I have not seen in the dramas of the young generation.

High art has taken refuge in the opera; but that is not French opera. I do not complain so much that French taste is less refined. I complain that French intellect is lowered. The descent from Polyeucte to Ruy Blas is great, not so much in the poetry of form as in the elevation of thought; but the descent from Ruy Blas to the best drama now produced is out of poetry altogether, and into those flats of prose which give not even the glimpse of a mountain-top.

But now to the opera. S—— in Norma ! The house was crowded, and its enthusiasm as loud as it was genuine. You tell me that S—— never rivalled Pasta, but certainly her Norma is a great performance. Her voice has lost less of its freshness than I had been told, and what is lost of it her practised management conceals or carries off.

The *Maestro* was quite right—I could never vie with her in her own line; but conceited and vain as I may seem even to you in saying so, I feel in my own line that I could command as large an applause—of course taking into account my brief-lived advantage of youth. Her acting, apart from her voice, does not please me. It seems to me to want intelligence of the subtler feeling, the undercurrent of emotion which constitutes the chief beauty of the situation and the character. Am I jealous when I say this ? Read on and judge.

On our return that night, when I had seen the Venosta to bed, I went into my own room, opened the window, and looked out. A lovely night, mild as in spring at Florence—the moon at her full, and the stars looking so calm and so high beyond our reach of their tranquillity. The evergreens in the gardens of the villas around me silvered over, and the summer boughs, not yet clothed with leaves, were scarcely visible amid the changeless smile of the laurels. At the distance lay Paris, only to be known by its innumerable lights. And then I said to myself—

"No, I cannot be an actress; I cannot resign my real self for that vamped-up hyprocite before the lamps. Out on those stage-robes and painted cheeks ! Out on that simulated utterance of sentiments learned by rote and practised before the looking-glass till every gesture has its drill ! "

Then I gazed on those stars which provoke our questionings, and return no answer, till my heart grew full, so full, and I bowed my head and wept like a child.

From the Same to the Same.

And still no letter from you ! I see in the journals that you have left Nice. Is it that you are too absorbed in your work to have leisure to write to me ? I know you are not ill; for if you were, all Paris would know of it.

All Europe has an interest in your health. Positively I will write to you no more till a word from yourself bids me do so.

I fear I must give up my solitary walks in the Bois de Boulogne: they were very dear to me, partly because the quiet path to which I confined myself was that to which you directed me as the one you habitually selected when at Paris, and in which you had brooded over and revolved the loveliest of your romances; and partly because it was there that, catching, alas! not inspiration but enthusiasm from the genius that had hallowed the place, and dreaming I might originate music, I nursed my own aspirations and murmured my own airs. And though so close to that world of Paris to which all artists must appeal for judgment or audience, the spot was so undisturbed, so sequestered. But of late that path has lost its solitude, and therefore its charm.

Six days ago the first person I encountered in my walk was a man whom I did not then heed. He seemed in thought, or rather in reverie, like myself; we passed each other twice or thrice, and I did not notice whether he was young or old, tall or short; but he came the next day, and a third day, and then I saw that he was young, and, in so regarding him, his eyes became fixed on mine. The fourth day he did not come, but two other men came, and the look of one was inquisitive and offensive. They sat themselves down on a bench in the walk, and though I did not seem to notice them, I hastened home; and the next day, in talking with our kind Madame Savarin, and alluding to these quiet walks of mine, she hinted, with the delicacy which is her characteristic, that the customs of Paris did not allow Demoiselles *comme il faut* to walk alone even in the most sequestered paths of the Bois.

I begin now to comprehend your disdain of customs which impose chains so idly galling on the liberty of our sex.

We dined with the Savarins last evening: what a joyous nature he has! Not reading Latin, I only know Horace by translations, which I am told are bad; but Savarin seems to me a sort of half Horace. Horace on his town-bred side, so playfully well bred, so good-humored in his philosophy, so affectionate to friends, and so biting to foes. But certainly Savarin could not have lived in a country farm upon endives and mallows. He is town-bred and Parisian, *jusqu'au bout des ongles*. How he admires you, and how I love him for it! Only in one thing he disappoints me there. It is your style that he chiefly praises: certainly that style is matchless; but style is only the clothing of thought, and to praise your style seems to me almost as invidious as the compliment to some perfect beauty, not on her form and face, but on her taste and dress.

We met at dinner an American and his wife —a Colonel and Mrs. Morley; she is delicately handsome, as the Amercian women I have seen generally are, and with that frank vivacity of manner which distinguishes them from English women. She seemed to take a fancy to me, and we soon grew very good friends.

She is the first advocate I have met, except yourself, of that doctrine upon the Rights of Women—of which one reads more in the journals than one hears discussed in *salons*.

Naturally enough I felt great interest in that subject, more especially since my rambles in the Bois were forbidden; and as long as she declaimed on the hard fate of the women who, feeling within them powers that struggle for aid and light beyond the close precinct of household duties find themselves restricted from fair rivalry with men in such fields of knowledge and toil and glory, as men since the world began have appropriated to themselves, I need not say that I went with her cordially: you can guess that by my former letters. But when she entered into the detailed catalogue of our exact wrongs and our exact rights, I felt all the pusillanimity of my sex, and shrank back in terror.

Her husband, joining us when she was in full tide of eloquence, smiled at me with a kind of saturnine mirth. "Mademoiselle, don't believe a word she says; it is only tall talk! In America the women are absolute tyrants, and it is I who, in concert with my oppressed countrymen, am going in for a platform agitation to restore the Rights of Men."

Upon this there was a lively battle of words between the spouses, in which, I must own, I thought the lady was decidedly worsted.

No, Eulalie, I see nothing in these schemes for altering our relations towards the other sex which would improve our condition. The inequalities we suffer are not imposed by law

—not even by convention; they are imposed by nature.

Eulalie, you have had an experience unknown to me; you have loved. In that day did you—you, round whom poets and sages and statesmen gather, listening to your words as to an oracle—did you feel that your pride of genius had gone out from you—that your ambition lived in him whom you loved—that his smile was more to you than the applause of the world?

I feel as if love in a woman must destroy her rights of equality—that it gives to her a sovereign even in one who would be inferior to herself if her love did not glorify and crown him. Ah! if I could but merge this terrible egotism which oppresses me, into the being of some one who is what I would wish to be were I man! I would not ask him to achieve fame. Enough if I felt that he was worthy of it, and happier methinks to console him when he failed than to triumph with him when he won. Tell me, have you felt this? When you loved did you stoop as to a slave, or did you bow down as to a master?

From Madame de Grantmesnil to Isaura Cicogna.

Chère enfant,—All your four letters have reached me the same day. In one of my sudden whims I set off with a few friends on a rapid tour along the Riviera to Genoa, thence to Turin on to Milan. Not knowing where we should rest even for a day, my letters were not forwarded.

I came back to Nice yesterday, consoled for all fatigues in having insured that accuracy in description of localities which my work necessitates.

You are, my poor child, in that revolutionary crisis through which genius passes in youth before it knows its own self, and longs vaguely to do or to be a something other than it has done or has been before. For, not to be unjust to your own powers, genius you have—that inborn undefinable essence, inciuding talent, and yet distinct from it. Genius you have, but genius unconcentrated, undisciplined. I see, though you are too diffident to say so openly, that you shrink from the fame of singer, because, fevered by your reading, you would fain aspire to the thorny crown of author. I echo the hard saying of the *Maestro*, I should be your worst enemy did I encourage you to forsake a career in which a dazzling success is so assured, for one in which, if it were your true vocation, you would not ask whether you were fit for it; you would be impelled to it by the terrible star which presides over the birth of poets.

Have you, who are so naturally observant, and of late have become so reflective, never remarked that authors, however absorbed in their own craft, do not wish their children to adopt it? The most successful author is perhaps the last person to whom neophytes should come for encouragement. This I think is not the case with the cultivators of the sister arts. The painter, the sculptor, the musician, seem disposed to invite disciples and welcome acolytes. As for those engaged in the practical affairs of life, fathers mostly wish their sons to be as they have been.

The politician, the lawyer, the merchant, each says to his children, "Follow my steps." All parents in practical life would at least agree in this—they would not wish their sons to be poets. There must be some sound cause in the world's philosophy for this general concurrence of digression from a road of which the travellers themselves say to those whom they love best, "Beware!"

Romance in youth is, if rightly understood, the happiest nutriment of wisdom in after-years; but I would never invite any one to look upon the romance of youth as a thing

"To case in periods and embalm in ink."

Enfant, have you need of a publisher to create romance? Is it not in yourself? Do not imagine that genius requires for its enjoyment the scratch of the pen and the types of the printer. Do not suppose that the poet, the *romancier*, is most poetic, most romantic, when he is striving, struggling, laboring, to check the rush of his ideas, and materialize the images which visit him as souls into such tangible likenesses of flesh and blood that the highest compliment a reader can bestow on them is to say that they are lifelike. No: the poet's real delight is not in the mechanism of composing; the best part of that delight is in the sympathies he has established with innumerable modifications of life and form, and art and nature—sympathies which are often found equally keen in those who have not the same gift of language. The

poet is but the interpreter. What of?—Truths in the hearts of others. He utters what they feel. Is the joy in the utterance? Nay, it is in the feeling itself. So, my dear, dark-bright child of song, when I bade thee open, out of the beaten thoroughfare, paths into the meads and river-banks at either side of the formal hedgerows, rightly dost thou add that I enjoined thee to make thine art thy companion. In the culture of that art for which you are so eminently gifted, you will find the ideal life ever beside the real. Are you not ashamed to tell me that in that art you do but utter the thoughts of others? You utter them in music; through the music you not only give to the thoughts a new character, but you make them reproductive of fresh thoughts in your audience.

You said very truly that you found in composing you could put into music thoughts which you could not put into words. That is the peculiar distinction of music. No genuine musician can explain in words exactly what he means to convey in his music.

How little a *libretto* interprets an opera—how little we care even to read it! It is the music that speaks to us; and how?—Through the human voice. We do not notice how poor are the words which the voice warbles. It is the voice itself interpreting the soul of the musician which enchants and enthrals us. And you who have that voice pretend to despise the gift. What! despise the power of communicating delight!—the power that we authors envy and rarely, if ever, can we give delight with so little alloy as the singer.

And when an audience disperses, can you guess what griefs the singer may have comforted? what hard hearts he may have softened? what high thoughts he may have awakened?

You say, "Out on the vamped-up hypocrite! Out on the stage-robes and painted cheeks!"

I say, "Out on the morbid spirit which so cynically regards the mere details by which a whole effect on the minds and hearts and souls of races and nations can be produced!"

There, have I scolded you sufficiently? I should scold you more, if I did not see in the affluence of your youth and your intellect the cause of your restlessness. Riches are always restless. It is only to poverty that the gods give content.

You question me about love: you ask if I have ever bowed to a master, ever merged my life in another's: expect no answer on this from me. Circe herself could give no answer to the simplest maid, who, never having loved, asks, "What is love?"

In the history of the passions each human heart is a world in itself; its experience profits no others. In no two lives does love play the same part or bequeath the same record.

I know not whether I am glad or sorry that the word "love" now falls on my ear with a sound as slight and as faint as the dropping of a leaf in autumn may fall on thine.

I volunteer but this lesson, the wisest I can give, if thou canst understand it: as I bade thee take art into thy life, so learn to look on life itself as an art. Thou couldst discover the charm in Tasso; thou couldst perceive that the requisite of all art, that which pleases, is in the harmony of proportion. We lose sight of beauty if we exaggerate the feature most beautiful.

Love proportioned, adorns the homeliest existence; love disproportioned, deforms the fairest.

Alas! wilt thou remember this warning when the time comes in which it may be needed?

E—— G——.

BOOK SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

It is several weeks after the date of the last chapter; the lime-trees in the Tuileries are clothed in green.

In a somewhat spacious apartment on the ground-floor in the quiet locality of the Rue d'Anjou a man was seated, very still, and evidently absorbed in deep thought, before a writing-table placed close to the window.

Seen thus there was an expression of great power, both of intellect and of character, in a face which, in ordinary social commune, might rather be noticeable for an aspect of hardy frankness, suiting well with the clear-cut, handsome profile and the rich dark auburn hair, waving carelessly over one of those broad open foreheads, which, according to an old writer, seem the "frontispiece of a temple dedicated to Honor."

The forehead, indeed, was the man's most remarkable feature. It could not but prepossess the beholder. When, in private theatricals, he had need to alter the character of his countenance, he did it effectually, merely by forcing down his hair till it reached his eyebrows. He no longer then looked like the same man.

The person I describe has been already introduced to the reader as Graham Vane. But perhaps this is the fit occasion to enter into some such details as to his parentage and position as may make the introduction more satisfactory and complete.

His father, the representative of a very ancient family, came into possession, after a long minority, of what may be called a fair squire's estate, and about half a million in moneyed investments, inherited on the female side. Both land and money were absolutely at his disposal, unencumbered by entail or settlement. He was a man of a brilliant, irregular genius, of princely generosity, of splendid taste, of a gorgeous kind of pride closely allied to a masculine kind of vanity. As soon as he was of age he began to build, converting his squire's hall into a ducal palace. He then stood for the county; and in days before the first Reform Bill, when a county election was to the estate of a candidate what a long war is to the debt of a nation. He won the election; he obtained early successes in Parliament. It was said by good authorities in political circles that, if he chose, he might aspire to lead his party, and ultimately to hold the first rank in the government of his country.

That may or may not be true; but certainly he did not choose to take the trouble necessary for such an ambition. He was too fond of pleasure, of luxury, of pomp. He kept a famous stud of racers and hunters. He was a munificent patron of art. His establishments, his entertainments, were on a par with those of the great noble who represented the loftiest (Mr. Vane would not own it to be the eldest) branch of his genealogical tree.

He became indifferent to political contests, indolent in his attendance at the House, speaking seldom, not at great length nor with much preparation, but with power and fire, originality and genius; so that he was not only effective as an orator, but, combining with eloquence advantages of birth, person, station, the reputation of patriotic independence, and genial attributes of character, he was an authority of weight in the scales of party.

This gentleman at the age of forty, married the dowerless daughter of a poor but distinguished naval officer, of noble family, first cousin to the Duke of Alton.

He settled on her a suitable jointure, but declined to tie up any portion of his property for the benefit of children by the marriage.

He declared that so much of his fortune was invested either in mines, the produce of which was extremely fluctuating, or in various funds, over rapid transfers in which it was his amusement and his interest to have control, unchecked by reference to trustees, that entails and settlements on children were an inconvenience he declined to incur.

Besides, he held notions of his own as to the wisdom of keeping children dependent on their father. "What numbers of young men," said he, "are ruined in character and in fortune by knowing that when their father dies they are certain of the same provision, no matter how they displease him; and in the meanwhile forestalling that provision by recourse to usurers." These arguments might not have prevailed over the bride's father a year or two later, when, by the death of intervening kinsmen, he became Duke of Alton; but in his then circumstances the marriage itself was so much beyond the expectations which the portionless daughter of a sea-captain has the right to form, that Mr. Vane had it all his own way, and he remained absolute master of his whole fortune, save of that part of his landed estate on which his wife's jointure was settled; and even from this encumbrance he was very soon freed. His wife died in the second year of marriage, leaving an only son—Graham. He grieved for her loss with all the passion of an impressionable, ardent, and powerful nature. Then for a while he sought distraction to his sorrow by throwihg himself into public life with a devoted energy he had not previously displayed.

His speeches served to bring his party into power, and he yielded, though reluctantly, to the unanimous demand of that party that he should accept one of the highest offices in the new Cabinet. He acquitted himself well as an administrator, but declared, no doubt honestly, that he felt like Sinbad released from the old man on his back, when, a year or two afterwards, he went out of office with his party. No persuasions could induce him to come in again; nor did he ever again take a very active part in debate. "No," said he, "I was born to the freedom of a private gentleman—intolerable to me is the thraldom of a public servant. But I will bring up my son so that he may acquit the debt which I decline to pay to my country." There he kept his word. Graham had been carefully educated for public life, the ambition for it dinned into his ear from childhood. In his school-vacations his father made him learn and declaim chosen specimens of masculine oratory; engaged an eminent actor to give him lessons in elocution; bade him frequent theatres, and study there the effect which words derive from looks and gesture; encouraged him to take part himself in private theatricals. To all this the boy lent his mind with delight. He had the orator's inborn temperament; quick, yet imaginative, and loving the sport of rivalry and contest. Being also, in his boyish years, good-humored and joyous, he was not more a favorite with the masters in the schoolroom than with the boys in the playground. Leaving Eton at seventeen, he then entered at Cambridge, and became, in his first term, the most popular speaker at the Union.

But his father cut short his academical career, and decided, for reasons of his own, to place him at once in Diplomacy. He was attached to the Embassy at Paris, and partook of the pleasures and dissipations of that metropolis too keenly to retain much of the sterner ambition to which he had before devoted himself. Becoming one of the spoiled darlings of fashion, there was great danger that his character would relax into the easy grace of the Epicurean, when all such loiterings in the Rose Garden were brought to abrupt close by a rude and terrible change in his fortunes.

His father was killed by a fall from his horse in hunting; and when his affairs were investigated, they were found to be hoplessly involved — apparently the assets would not suffice for the debts. The elder Vane himself was probably not aware of the extent of his liabilities. He had never wanted ready money to the last. He could always obtain that from a money-lender, or from the sale of his funded investments. But it became obvious, on examining his papers, that he knew at least how impaired would be the heritage he should bequeath to a son whom he idolized. For that reason he had given Graham a profession in diplomacy, and for that reason he had privately applied to the Ministry for the Viceroyalty of India, in the event of its speedy vacancy. He was eminent enough not to anticipate refusal, and with economy in that lucrative post much of his pecuniary difficulties

might have been redeemed, and at least an independent provision secured for his son.

Graham, like Alain de Rochebriant, allowed no reproach on his father's memory—indeed, with more reason than Alain, for the elder Vane's fortune had at least gone on no mean and frivolous dissipation.

It had lavished itself on encouragement to art—on great objects of public beneficence—on public-spirited aid of political objects; and even in mere selfish enjoyments there was a certain grandeur in his princely hospitalities, in his munificent generosity, in a warm-hearted carelessness for money. No indulgence in petty follies or degrading vices aggravated the offence of the magnificent squanderer.

"Let me look on my loss of fortune as a gain to myself," said Graham, manfully. "Had I been a rich man, my experience of Paris tells me that I should most likely have been a very idle one. Now that I have no gold, I must dig in myself for iron."

The man to whom he said this was an uncle-in-law, if I may use that phrase—the Right Hon. Richard King, popularly styled "the blameless King."

This gentleman had married the sister of Graham's mother, whose loss in his infancy and boyhood she had tenderly and anxiously sought to supply. It is impossible to conceive a woman more fitted to invite love and reverence than was Lady Janet King, her manners were so sweet and gentle, her whole nature so elevated and pure.

Her father had succeeded to the dukedom when she married Mr. King, and the alliance was not deemed quite suitable. Still it was not one to which the Duke would have been fairly justified in refusing his assent.

Mr. King could not, indeed, boast of noble ancestry, nor was he even a landed proprietor; but he was a not undistinguished member of Parliament, of irreproachable character, and ample fortune inherited from a distant kinsman, who had enriched himself as a merchant. It was on both sides a marriage of love.

It is popularly said that a man uplifts a wife to his own rank; it as often happens that a woman uplifts her husband to the dignity of her own character. Richard King rose greatly in public estimation after his marriage with Lady Janet.

She united to a sincere piety a very active and a very enlightened benevolence. She guided his ambition aside from mere party politics into subjects of social and religious interest, and in devoting himself to these he achieved a position more popular and more respected than he could ever have won in the strife of party.

When the Government of which the elder Vane became a leading Minister was formed, it was considered a great object to secure a name so high in the religious world, so beloved by the working classes, as that of Richard King; and he accepted one of those places which, though not in the Cabinet, confers the rank of Privy Councillor.

When that brief-lived Administration ceased, he felt the same sensation of relief that Vane had felt, and came to the same resolution never again to accept office, but from different reasons, all of which need not now be detailed. Amongst them, however, certainly this:—He was exceedingly sensitive to opinion, thin-skinned as to abuse, and very tenacious of the respect due to his peculiar character of sanctity and philantropy. He writhed under every newspaper article that had made "the blameless King" responsible for the iniquities of the Government to which he belonged. In the loss of office he seemed to recover his former throne.

Mr. King heard Graham's resolution with a grave approving smile, and his interest in the young man became greatly increased. He devoted himself strenuously to the object of saving to Graham some wrecks of his paternal fortunes, and having a clear head and great experience in the transaction of business, he succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectations formed by the family solicitor. A rich manufacturer was found to purchase at a fancy price the bulk of the estate with the palatial mansion, which the estate alone could never have sufficed to maintain with suitable establishments.

So that when all debts were paid, Graham found himself in possession of a clear income of about £500 a year, invested in a mortgage secured on a part of the hereditary lands, on which was seated an old hunting-lodge bought by a brewer.

With this portion of the property Graham parted very reluctantly. It was situated amid the most picturesque scenery on the estate,

and the lodge itself was a remnant of the original residence of his ancestors before it had been abandoned for that which, built in the reign of Elizabeth, had been expanded into a Trenthamlike palace by the last owner.

But Mr. King's argument reconciled him to the sacrifice. "I can manage," said the prudent adviser, "if you insist on it, to retain that remnant of the hereditary estate which you are so loth to part with. But how? by mortgaging it to an extent that will scarcely leave you £50 a-year net from the rents. This is not all. Your mind will then be distracted from the large object of a career to the small object of retaining a few family acres; you will be constantly hampered by private anxieties and fears: you could do nothing for the benefit of those around you—could not repair a farmhouse for a better class of tenant—could not rebuild a laborer's dilapidated cottage. Give up an idea that might be very well for a man whose sole ambition was to remain a squire, however beggarly. Launch yourself into the larger world of metropolitan life with energies wholly unshackled, a mind wholly undisturbed, and secure of an income which, however modest, is equal to that of most young men who enter that world as your equals."

Graham was convinced, and yielded, though with a bitter pang. It is hard for a man whose fathers have lived on the soil to give up all trace of their whereabouts. But none saw in him any morbid consciousness of change of fortune, when, a year after his father's death, he reassumed his place in society. If before courted for his expectations, he was still courted for himself; by many of the great who had loved his father, perhaps even courted more.

He resigned the diplomatic career, not merely because the rise in that profession is slow, and in the intermediate steps the chances of distinction are slight and few, but more because he desired to cast his lot in the home country, and regarded the courts of other lands as exile.

It was not true, however, as Lemercier had stated on report, that he lived on his pen. Curbing all his old extravagant tastes, £500 a-year amply supplied his wants. But he had by his pen gained distinction, and created great belief in his abilities for a public career. He had written critical articles, read with much praise, in periodicals of authority, and had published one or two essays on political questions, which had created yet more sensation. It was only the graver literature, connected more or less with his ultimate object of a public career, in which he had thus evinced his talents of composition. Such writings were not of a nature to bring him much money, but they gave him a definite and solid station. In the old time, before the first Reform Bill, his reputation would have secured him at once a seat in Parliament; but the ancient nurseries of statesmen are gone, and their place is not supplied.

He had been invited, however, to stand for more than one large and populous borough, with very fair prospects of success; and whatever the expense, Mr. King had offered to defray it. But Graham would not have incurred the latter obligation; and when he learned the pledges which his supporters would have exacted, he would not have stood if success had been certain and the cost nothing. "I cannot," he said to his friends, "go into the consideration of what is best for the country with my thoughts manacled; and I cannot be both representative and slave of the greatest ignorance of the greatest number. I bide my time, and meanwhile I prefer to write as I please, rather than vote as I don't please."

Three years went by, passed chiefly in England, partly in travel; and at the age of thirty, Graham Vane was still one of those of whom admirers say, "He will be a great man some day;" and detractors reply, "Some day seems a long way off."

The same fastidiousness which had operated against that entrance into Parliament to which his ambition not the less steadily adapted itself, had kept him free from the perils of wedlock. In his heart he yearned for love and domestic life, but he had hitherto met with no one who realized the ideal he had formed. With his person, his accomplishments, his connections, and his repute, he might have made many an advantageous marriage. But somehow or other other the charm vanished from a fair face, if the shadow of a money-bag fell on it; on the other hand, his ambition occupied so large a share in his thoughts that he would have fled in time from the temptation of a marriage that would have overweighted him beyond the chance of rising. Added to all,

he desired in a wife an intellect that, if not equal to his own, could become so by sympathy —a union of high culture and noble aspiration, and yet of loving womanly sweetness which a man seldom finds out of books; and when he does find it, perhaps it does not wear the sort of face that he fancies. Be that as it may, Graham was still unmarried and heart-whole.

And now a new change in his life befell him. Lady Janet died of a fever contracted in her habitual rounds of charity among the houses of the poor. She had been to him as the most tender mother, and a lovelier soul than hers never alighted on the earth. His grief was intense; but what was her husband's ?—one of those griefs that kill.

To the side of Richard King his Janet had been as the guardian angel. His love for her was almost worship—with her, every object in a life hitherto so active and useful seemed gone. He evinced no noisy passion of sorrow. He shut himself up, and refused to see even Graham. But after some weeks had passed, he admitted the clergyman in whom, on spiritual matters, he habitually confided, and seemed consoled by the visits; then he sent for his lawyer, and made his will; after which he allowed Graham to call on him daily, on the condition that there should be no reference to his loss. He spoke to the young man on other subjects, rather drawing him out about himself, sounding his opinion on various grave matters, watching his face while he questioned, as if seeking to dive into his heart, and sometimes pathetically sinking into silence, broken but by sighs. So it went on for a few more weeks; then he took the advice of his physician to seek change of air and scene. He went away alone, without even a servant, not leaving word where he had gone. After a little while he returned, more ailing, more broken than before. One morning he was found insensible—stricken by paralysis. He regained consciousness, and even for some days rallied strength. He might have recovered, but he seemed as if he tacitly refused to live. He expiried at last, peacefully, in Graham's arms.

At the opening of his will it was found that he had left Graham his sole heir and executor. Deducting Government duties, legacies to servants, and donations to public charities, the sum thus bequeathed to his lost wife's nephew was two hundred and twenty thousand pounds. With such a fortune, opening indeed was made for an ambition so long obstructed. But Graham affected no change in his mode of life; he still retained his modest bachelor's apartments—engaged no servants—bought no horses—in no way exceeded the income he had possessed before. He seemed, indeed, depressed rather than elated by the succession to a wealth which he had never anticipated.

Two children had been born from the marriage of Richard King; they had died young, it is true, but Lady Janet at the time of her own decease was not too advanced in years for the reasonable expectation of other offspring; and even after Richard King became a widower, he had given to Graham no hint of his testamentary dispositions. The young man was no blood-relation to him, and naturally supposed that such relations would become the heirs. But in truth the deceased seemed to have no blood-relations—none had ever been known to visit him—none raised a voice to question the justice of his will.

Lady Janet had been buried at Kensal Green; her husband's remains were placed in the same vault.

For days and days Graham went his way lonelily to the cemetery. He might be seen standing motionless by that tomb, with tears rolling down his cheeks; yet his was not a weak nature—not one of those that love indulgence of irremediable grief. On the contrary, people who did not know him well said " that he had more head than heart," and the character of his pursuits, as of his writings, was certainly not that of a sentamentalist. He had not thus visited the tomb till Richard King had been placed within it. Yet his love for his aunt was unspeakably greater than that which he could have felt for her husband. Was it, then, the husband that he so much more acutely mourned; or was there something that, since the husband's death, had deepened his reverence for the memory of her whom he had not only loved as a mother, but honored as a saint ?

These visit to the cemetery did not cease till Graham was confined to his bed by a very grave illness—the only one he had ever known. His physician said it was nervous fever, and occasioned by moral shock or excitement; it was attended with delirium. His recovery was

slow, and when it was sufficiently completed he quitted England; and we find him now, with his mind composed, his strength restored, and his spirits braced, in that gay city of Paris, hiding, perhaps, some earnest purpose amid his participation in its holiday enjoyments.

He is now, as I have said, seated before his writing-table in deep thought. He takes up a letter which he had already glanced over hastily, and reperuses it with more care.

The letter is from his cousin, the Duke of Alton, who had succeeded a few years since to the family honors—an able man, with no small degree of information, an ardent politician, but of very rational and temperate opinions; too much occupied by the cares of a princely estate to covet office for himself; too sincere a patriot not to desire office for those to whose hands he thought the country might be most safely entrusted—an intimate friend of Graham's. The contents of the letter are these:—

MY DEAR GRAHAM,—I trust that you will welcome the brilliant opening into public life which these lines are intended to announce to you. Vavasour has just been with me to say that he intends to resign his seat for the county when Parliament meets, and agreeing with me that there is no one so fit to succeed him as yourself, he suggests the keeping his intention secret until you have arranged your committee and are prepared to take the field. You cannot hope to escape a contest; but I have examined the Register, and the party has gained rather than lost since the last election, when Vavasour was so triumphantly returned. The expenses for this county, where there are so many out-voters to bring up, and so many agents to retain, are always large in comparison with some other counties; but that consideration is all in your favor, for it deters Squire Hunston, the only man who could beat you, from starting; and to your resources a thousand pounds more or less are a trifle not worth discussing. You know how difficult it is nowadays to find a seat for a man of moderate opinions like yours and mine. Our county would exactly suit you. The constituency is so evenly divided between the urban and rural populations, that its representative must fairly consult the interests of both. He can be neither an ultra-Tory nor a violent Radical. He is left to the enviable freedom, to which you say you aspire, of considering what is best for the country as a whole.

Do not lose so rare an opportunity. There is but one drawback to your triumphant candidature. It will be said that you have no longer an acre in the county in which the Vanes have been settled so long. That drawback can be removed. It is true that you can never hope to buy back the estates which you were compelled to sell at your father's death—the old manufacturer gripes them too firmly to loosen his hold; and after all, even were your income double what it is, you would be overhoused in the vast pile in which your father buried so large a share of his fortune. But that beautiful old hunting-lodge, the *Stamm Schloss* of your family, with the adjacent farms, can be now repurchased very reasonably. The brewer who bought them is afflicted with an extravagant son, whom he placed in the —— Hussars, and will gladly sell the property for £5,000 more than he gave: well worth the difference, as he has improved the farm-buildings and raised the rental. I think, in addition to the sum you have on mortgage, £23,000 will be accepted, and as a mere investment pay you nearly three per cent. But to you it is worth more than double the money; it once more identifies your ancient name with the county. You would be a greater personage with that moderate holding in the district in which your race took root, and on which your father's genius threw such a lustre, than you would be if you invested all your wealth in a county in which every squire and farmer would call you "the new man." Pray think over this most seriously, and instruct your solicitor to open negotiations with the brewer at once. But rather put yourself into the train, and come back to England straight to me. I will ask Vavasour to meet you. What news from Paris? Is the Emperor as ill as the papers insinuate? And is the revolutionary party gaining ground?

Your affectionate cousin,

ALTON.

As he put down his letter, Graham heaved a short impatient sigh.

"The old *Stamm Schloss*," he muttered—"a foot on the old soil once more! and an entrance into the great arena with hands unfettered. Is it possible!—is it—is it?"

At this moment the door-bell of the apartment rang, and a servant whom Graham had hired at Paris as a *laquais de place* announced "*Ce Monsieur.*"

Graham hurried the letter into his portfolio, and said, "You mean the person to whom I am always at home?"

"The same, Monsieur."

"Admit him, of course."

There entered a wonderfully thin man, middle-aged, clothed in black, his face cleanly shaven, his hair cut very short, with one of those faces which, to use a French expression, say "nothing." It was absolutely without expression—it had not even, despite its thinness, one salient feature. If you had found yourself anywhere seated next to that man, your eye would have passed him over as too insignificant to notice; if at a *café*, you would have gone on talking to your friend without lowering your voice. What mattered it whether a *bête* like that overheard or not? Had you been asked to guess his calling and station, you might have said, minutely observing the freshness of his clothes and the undeniable respectability of his *tout ensemble*, "He must be well

off, and with no care for customers on his mind —a *ci-devant* chandler who has retired on a legacy."

Graham rose at the entrance of his visitor, motioned him courteously to a seat beside him, and waiting till the *laquais* had vanished, then asked "What news?"

"None, I fear, that will satisfy Monsieur. I have certainly hunted out, since I had last the honor to see you, no less than four ladies of the name of Duval, but only one of them took that name from her parents, and was also christened Louise."

"Ah—Louise!"

"Yes, the daughter of a perfumer, aged twenty-eight. She therefore, is not the Louise you seek. Permit me to refer to your instructions." Here M. Renard took out a note-book, turned over the leaves, and resumed—"Wanted, Louise Duval, daughter of Auguste Duval, a French drawing-master, who lived for many years at Tours, removed to Paris in 1845, lived at No. 12, Rue de S—— at Paris for some years, but afterwards moved to a different *quartier* of the town, and died, 1848, in Rue L——, No. 39. Shortly after his death, his daughter Louise left that lodging, and could not be traced. In 1849 official documents reporting her death were forwarded from Munich to a person (a friend of yours, Monsieur). Death, of course, taken for granted; but nearly five years afterwards, this very person encountered the said Louise Duval at Aix-la-Chapelle, and never heard nor saw more of her. *Demande* submitted, to find out said Louise Duval or any children of hers born in 1848–9; supposed in 1852–3 to have one child, a girl, between four and five years old. Is that right, Monsieur?"

"Quite right."

"And this is the whole information given to me. Monsieur on giving it asked me if I thought it desirable that he should commence inquiries at Aix-la-Chapelle, where Louise Duval was last seen by the person interested to discover her. I reply, No; pains thrown away. Aix-la-Chapelle is not a place where any Frenchwoman not settled there by a marriage would remain. Nor does it seem probable that the said Duval would venture to select for her residence Munich, a city in which she had contrived to obtain certificates of her death. A Frenchwoman who has once known Paris always wants to get back to it; especially, Monsieur, if she has the beauty which you assign to this lady. I therefore suggested that our inquiries should commence in this capital. Monsieur agreed with me, and I did not grudge the time necessary for investigation."

"You were most obliging. Still I am beginning to be impatient if time is to be thrown away."

"Naturally. Permit me to return to my notes. Monsieur informs me that twenty-one years ago, in 1848, the Parisian police were instructed to find out this lady and failed, but gave hopes of discovering her through her relations. He asks me to refer to our archives; I tell him that is no use. However, in order to oblige him, I do so. No trace of such inquiry—it must have been, as Monsieur led me to suppose, a strictly private one, unconnected with crime or with politics; and as I have the honor to tell Monsieur, no record of such investigations is preserved in our office. Great scandal would there be, and injury to the peace of families, if we preserved the results of private inquiries intrusted to us—by absurdly jealous husbands, for instance. Honor, Monsieur, honor forbids it. Next I suggest to Monsieur that his simplest plan would be an advertisement in the French journals, stating, if I understand him right, that it is for the pecuniary interest of Madame or Mademoiselle Duval, daughter of Auguste Duval, *artiste en dessin*, to come forward. Monsieur objects to that."

"I object to it extremely: as I have told you, this is a strictly confidential inquiry, and an advertisement, which in all likelihood would be practically useless (it proved to be so in a former inquiry), would not be resorted to unless all else failed, and even then with reluctance."

"Quite so. Accordingly, Monsieur delegates to me, who have been recommended to him as the best person he can employ in that department of our police which is not connected with crime or political *surveillance*, a task the most difficult. I have, through strictly private investigations, to discover the address and prove the identity of a lady bearing a name among the most common in France, and of whom nothing has been heard for fifteen years, and then at so migratory an *endroit* as Aix-la-Chapelle.

You will not or cannot inform me if since that time the lady has changed her name by marriage?"

"I have no reason to think that she has; and there are reasons against the supposition that she married after 1849."

"Permit me observe that the more details of information Monsieur can give me, the easier my task of research will be."

"I have given you all the details I can, and, aware of the difficulty of tracing a person with a name so much the reverse of singular, I adopted your advice in our first interview, of asking some Parisian friend of mine, with a large acquaintance in the miscellaneous societies of your capital, to inform me of any ladies of that name whom he might chance to encounter; and he, like you, has lighted upon one or two, who, alas! resemble the right one in name, and nothing more."

"You will do wisely to keep him on the watch as well as myself. If it were but a murderess or a political incendiary, then you might trust exclusively to the enlightenment of our *corps*, but this seems an affair of sentiment, Monsieur. Sentiment is not in our way. Seek the trace of that in the haunts of pleasure."

M. Renard, having thus poetically delivered himself of that philosophical dogma, rose to depart.

Graham slipped into his hand a bank-note of sufficient value to justify the profound bow he received in return.

When M. Renard had gone, Graham heaved another impatient sigh, and said to himself, "No, it is not possible—at least not yet."

Then, compressing his lips as a man who forces himself to something he dislikes, he dipped his pen into the inkstand, and wrote rapidly thus to his kinsman:—

MY DEAR COUSIN,—I lose not a post in replying to your kind and considerate letter. It is not in my power at present to return to England. I need not say how fondly I cherish the hope of representing the dear old county some day. If Vavasour could be induced to defer his resignation of the seat for another session, or at least for six or seven months, why then I might be free to avail myself of the opening; at present I am not. Meanwhile, I am sorely tempted to buy back the old Lodge—probably the brewer would allow me to leave on mortgage the sum I myself have on the property, and a few additional thousands. I have reasons for not wishing to transfer at present much of the money now invested in the funds. I will consider this point, which probably does not press.

I reserve all Paris news till my next; and begging you to forgive so curt and unsatisfactory a reply to a letter so important that it excites me more than I like to own, believe me, your affectionate friend and cousin,

GRAHAM.

CHAPTER II.

AT about the same hour on the same day in which the Englishman held the conference with the Parisian detective just related, the Marquis de Rochebriant found himself by appointment in the *cabinet d'affaires* of his *avoué* M. Gandrin: that gentleman had hitherto not found time to give him a definitive opinion as to the case submitted to his judgment. The *avoué* received Alain with a kind of forced civility, in which the natural intelligence of the Marquis, despite his inexperience of life, discovered embarrassment.

"Monsieur le Marquis," said Gandrin, fidgeting among the papers on his bureau, "this is a very complicated business. I have given not only my best attention to it, but to your general interests. To be plain, your estate, though a fine one, is fearfully encumbered—fearfully—frightfully."

"Sir," said the Marquis, haughtily, "that is a fact which was never disguised from you."

"I do not say that it was, Marquis; but I scarcely realized the amount of the liabilities nor the nature of the property. It will be difficult—nay, I fear, impossible—to find any capitalist to advance a sum that will cover the mortgages at an interest less than you now pay. As for a Company to take the whole trouble off your hands, clear off the mortgages, manage the forests, develop the fisheries, guarantee you an adequate income, and at the end of twenty-one years or so render up to you or your heirs the free enjoyment of an estate thus improved, we must dismiss that prospect as a wild dream of my good friend M. Hébert's. People in the provinces do dream; in Paris everybody is wide awake."

"Monsieur," said the Marquis, with that inborn imperturable loftiness of *sang froid* which has always in adverse circumstances characterized the French *noblesse*, "be kind enough to restore my papers. I see that you are not the man for me. Allow me only to thank you, and inquire the amount of my debt for the trouble I have given."

"Perhaps you are quite justified in thinking I am not the man for you, Monsieur le Marquis; and your papers shall, if you decide on dismissing me, be returned to you this evening. But as to my accepting remuneration where I have rendered no service, I request M. le Marquis to put that out of the question. Considering myself, then, no longer your *avoué*, do not think I take too great a liberty in volunteering my counsel as a friend—or a friend at least to M. Hébert, if you do not vouchsafe my right so to address yourself."

M. Gandrin spoke with a certain dignity of voice and manner which touched and softened his listener.

"You make me your debtor far more than I pretend to repay," replied Alian. "Heaven knows I want a friend, and I will heed with gratitude and respect all your counsels in that character."

"Plainly and briefly, my advice is this: Monsieur Louvier is the principal mortgagee. He is among the six richest capitalists of Paris. He does not, therefore, want money, but, like most self-made men, he is very accessible to social vanities. He would be proud to think he had rendered a service to a Rochebriant. Approach him, either through me, or, far better, at once introduce yourself, and propose to consolidate all your other liabilities in one mortgage to him, at a rate of interest lower than that which is now paid to some of the small mortgagees. This would add considerably to your income and would carry out M. Hébert's advice.

"But does it not strike you, dear M. Gandrin, that such going, cap-in-hand to one who has power over my fate, while I have none over his, would scarcely be consistant with my self-respect, not as Rochebriant only, but as Frenchman?"

"It does not strike me so in the least; at all events, I could make the proposal on your behalf, without compromising yourself, though I should be far more sanguine of success if you addressed M. Louvier in person."

I should nevertheless prefer leaving it in your hands; but even for that I must take a few days to consider. Of all the mortgagees, M. Louvier has been hitherto the severest and the most menacing, the one whom Hébert dreads the most; and should he become sole mortgagee, my whole estate would pass to him if, through any succession of bad seasons and failing tenants, the interest was not punctually paid."

"It could so pass to him now."

"No; for there have been years in which the other mortgagees, who are Bretons, and would be loth to ruin a Rochebriant, have been lenient and patient."

"If Louvier has not been equally so, it is only because he knew nothing of you, and your father no doubt had often sorely tasked his endurance. Come, suppose we manage to break the ice easily. Do me the honor to dine here to meet him; you will find that he is not an unpleasant man."

The Marquis hesitated, but the thought of the sharp and seemingly hopeless struggle for the retention of his ancestral home to which he would be doomed if he returned from Paris unsuccessful in his errand over-mastered his pride. He felt as if that self-conquest was a duty he owed to the very tombs of his fathers. "I ought not to shrink from the face of a creditor," said he, smiling somewhat sadly, "and I accept the proposal you so graciously make."

"You do well, Marquis, and I will write at once to Louvier to ask him to give me his first disengaged day."

The Marquis had no sooner quitted the house than M. Gandrin opened a door at the side of his office, and a large portly man strode into the room—stride it was rather than step—firm, self-assured, arrogant, and masterful.

"Well, *mon ami*," said this man, taking his stand at the hearth, as a king might take his stand in the hall of his vassal—"and what says our *petit muscadin?*"

"He is neither *petit* nor *muscadin*, Monsieur Louvier," replied Gandrin, peevishly; "and he will task your powers to get him thoroughly into your net. But I have persuaded him to meet you here. What day can you dine with me? I had better ask no one else."

"To-morrow I dine with my friend O——, to meet the chiefs of the Opposition," said Mons. Louvier, with a sort of careless rollicking pomposity. "Thursday with Pereire—Saturday I entertain at home. Say Friday. Your hour?"

"Seven."

"Good! Show me those Rochebriant papers again; there is something I had forgotten to

note. Never mind me. Go on with your work as if I were not here."

Louvier took up the papers, seated himself in an arm-chair by the fireplace, stretched out his legs, and read at his ease, but with a very rapid eye, as a practised lawyer skims through the techinal forms of a case to fasten upon the marrow of it.

"Ah! as I thought. The farms could not pay even the interest on my present mortgage; the forests come in for that. If a contractor for the yearly sale of the woods was bankrupt and did not pay, how could I get my interest? Answer me that, Gandrin."

"Certainly you must run the risk of that chance."

"Of course the chance occurs, and then I foreclose *— I seize,— Rochebriant and its *seigneuries* are mine."

As he spoke he laughed, not sardonically—a jovial laugh—and opened wide, to reshut as in a vice, the strong iron hand which had doubtless closed over many a man's all.

"Thanks. On Friday, seven o'clock." He tossed the papers back on the bureau, nodded a royal nod, and strode forth imperiously as he had strided in.

CHAPTER III.

MEANWHILE the young Marquis pursued his way thoughtfully through the streets, and entered the Champs Elysées. Since we first, nay, since we last saw him, he is strikingly improved in outward appearances. He has unconsciously acquired more of the easy grace of the Parisian in gait and bearing. You would no longer detect the Provincial—perhaps, however, because he is now dressed, though very simply, in habiliments that belong to the style of the day. Rarely among the loungers in the Champs Elysées could be seen a finer form, a comelier face, an air of more unmistakable distinction.

The eyes of many a passing fair one gazed on him, admiringly or coquettishly. But he was still so little the true Parisian that they got no smile, no look in return. He was rapt in his own thoughts; was he thinking of M. Louvier?

He had nearly gained the entrance of the Bois de Boulogne, when he was accosted by a voice behind, and turning round saw his friend Lemercier arm-in-arm with Graham Vane.

"*Bonjour*, Alain," said Lemercier, hooking his disengaged arm into Rochebriant's. "I suspect we are going the same way."

Alain felt himself change countenance at this conjecture, and replied coldly, "I think not; I have got to the end of my walk, and shall turn back to Paris;" addressing himself to the Englishman, he said with formal politeness, "I regret not to have found you at home when I called some weeks ago, and no less so to have been out when you had the complaisance to return my visit."

"At all events," replied the Englishman, "let me not lose the opportunity of improving our acquaintance which now offers. It is true that our friend Lemercier, catching sight of me in the Rue de Rivoli, stopped his *coupé* and carried me off for a promenade in the Bois. The fineness of the day tempted us to get out of his carriage as the Bois came in sight. But if you are going back to Paris I relinquish the Bois and offer myself as your companion."

Frederic (the name is so familiarly English that the Reader might think me pedantic did I accentuate it as French) looked from one to the other of his two friends, half amused and half angry.

"And am I to be left alone to achieve a conquest, in which if I succeed, I shall change into hate and envy the affection of my two best friends?—Be it so.

'Un véritable amant ne connait point d'amis.'"

"I do not comprehend your meaning," said the Marquis, with a compressed lip and a slight frown.

"Bah!" cried Frederic; "come, *franc jeu*—cards on the table—M. Gram Varn was going into the Bois at my suggestion on the chance of having another look at the pearl-colored angel; and you, Rochebriant, can't deny that you were going into the Bois for the same object."

"One may pardon an *enfant terrible*," said the Englishman, laughing, "but an *ami terrible* should be sent to the galleys. Come, Marquis, let us walk back and submit to our fate.

* For the sake of the general reader, English technical words are here, as elsewhere, substituted as much as possible for French.

Even were the lady once more visible, we have no chance of being observed by the side of a Lovelace so accomplished and so audacious!"

"Adieu, then, recreants—I go alone. Victory or death."

The Parisian beckoned his coachman, entered his carriage, and with a mocking grimace kissed his hand to the companions thus deserting our deserted.

Rochebriant touched the Englishman's arm, and said, "Do you think that Lemercier could be impertinent enough to accost that lady?"

"In the first place," returned the Englishman, "Lemercier himself tells me that the lady has for several weeks relinquished her walks in the Bois, and the probability is, therefore, that he will not have the opportunity to accost her. In the next place, it appears that when she did take her solitary walk, she did not stray far from her carriage, and was in reach of the protection of her *laquais* and coachman. But to speak honestly, do you, who know know Lemercier better than I, take him to be a man who would commit an impertinence to a woman unless there were *viveurs* of his own sex to see him do it."

Alain smiled. "No. Frederic's real nature is an admirable one; and if he ever do anything that he ought to be ashamed of, 'twill be from the pride of showing how finely he can do it. Such was his character at College, and such it still seems at Paris. But it is true that the lady has forsaken her former walk; at least I—I have not seen her since the day I first beheld her in company with Frederic.—Yet, pardon me, you were going to the Bois on the chance of seeing her. Perhaps she has changed the direction of her walk, and—and——"

The Marquis stopped short, stammering and confused.

The Englishman scanned his countenance with the rapid glance of a practised observer of men and things, and after a short pause, said: "If the lady has selected some other spot for her promenade, I am ignorant of it; nor have I even volunteered the chance of meeting with her, since I learned—first from Lemercier, and afterwards from others—that her destination is the stage. Let us talk frankly, Marquis. I am accustomed to take much exercise on foot, and the Bois is my favorite resort. One day I there found myself in the *allée* which the lady we speak of used to select for her promenade, and there saw her. Something in her face impressed me; how shall I describe the impression? Did you ever open a poem, a romance, in some style wholly new to you, and before you were quite certain whether or not its merits justified the interest which the novelty inspired, you were summoned away, or the book was taken out of your hands? If so, did you not feel an intellectual longing to have another glimpse of the book? That illustration describes my impression, and I own that I twice again went to the same *allée*. The last time I only caught sight of the young lady as she was getting into her carriage. As she was then borne away, I perceived one of the custodians of the Bois; and learned, on questioning him, that the lady was in the habit of walking always alone in the same *allée* at the same hour on most fine days, but that he did not know her name or address. A motive of curiosity—perhaps an idle one—then made me ask Lemercier, who boasts of knowing his Paris so intimately, if he could inform me who the lady was. He undertook to ascertain."

"But," interposed the Marquis, "he did not ascertain who she was; he only ascertained where she lived, and that she and an elder companion were Italians—whom he suspected, without sufficient ground, to be professional singers."

"True; but since then I ascertained more detailed particulars from two acquaintances of mine who happen to know her—M. Savarin, the distinguised writer, and Mrs. Morley, an accomplished and beautiful American lad, who is more than an acquaintance. I may boast the honor of ranking among her friends. As Savarin's villa is at a A——, I asked him incidentally if he knew the fair neighbor whose face had so attracted me; and Mrs. Morley being present, and overhearing me, I learned from both what I now repeat to you.

"The young lady is a Signorina Cicogna—at Paris, exchanging (except among particular friends), as is not unusual, the outlandish designation of Signorina for the more conventional one of Mademoiselle. Her father was a member of the noble Milanese family of the same name, therefore the young lady is well born. Her father has been long dead; his widow married again an English gentleman settled in Italy,

a scholar and antiquarian; his name was Selby. This gentleman, also dead, bequeathed the Signorina a small but sufficient competence. She is now an orphan, and residing with a companion, a Signorina Venosta, who was once a singer of some repute at the Neapolitan Theatre, in the orchestra of which her husband was principal performer; but she relinquished the stage several years ago on becoming a widow, and gave lessons as a teacher. She has the character of being a scientific musician, and of unblemished private respectability. Subsequently she was induced to give up general teaching, and undertake the musical education and the social charge of the young lady with her. This girl is said to have early given promise of extraordinary excellence as a singer, and excited great interest among a coterie of literary critics and musical *cognoscenti*. She was to have come out at the Theatre of Milan a year or two ago, but her career has been suspended in consequence of ill-health, for which she is now at Paris under the care of an English physician, who has made remarkable cures in all complaints of the respiratory organs. M——, the great composer, who knows her, says that in expression and feeling she has no living superior, perhaps no equal since Malibran."

"You seem, dear Monsieur, to have taken much pains to acquire this information."

"No great pains were necessary; but had they been I might have taken them, for, as I have owned to you, Mademoiselle Cicogna, while she was yet a mystery to me, strangely interested my thoughts or my fancies. That interest has now ceased. The world of actresses and singers lies apart from mine."

"Yet," said Alain, in a tone of voice that implied doubt, "if I understand Lemercier aright, you were going with him to the Bois on the chance of seeing again the lady in whom your interest has ceased."

"Lemercier's account was not strictly accurate. He stopped his carriage to speak to me on quite another subject, on which I have consulted him, and then proposed to take me on to the Bois. I assented; and it was not till we were in the carriage that he suggested the idea of seeing whether the pearly-robed lady had resumed her walk in the *allée*. You may judge how indifferent I was to that chance when I preferred turning back with you to going on with him. Between you and me, Marquis, to men of our age, who have the business of life before them, and feel that if there be aught in which *noblesse oblige* it is a severe devotion to noble objects, there is nothing more fatal to such devotion than allowing the heart to be blown hither and thither at every breeze of mere fancy, and dreaming ourselves into love with some fair creature whom we never could marry consistently with the career we have set before our ambition. I could not marry an actress—neither, I presume, could the Marquis de Rochebriant; and the thought of a courtship, which excluded the idea of marriage to a young orphan of name unblemished—of virtue unsuspected—would certainly not be compatible with 'devotion to noble objects.'"

Alain involuntarily bowed his head in assent to the proposition, and, it may be, in submission to an implied rebuke. The two men walked in silence for some minutes, and Graham first spoke, changing altogether the subject of the conversation.

"Lemercier tells me you decline going much into this world of Paris—the capital of capitals—which appears so irresistibly attractive to us foreigners."

"Possibly; but, to borrow your words, I have the business of life before me."

"Business is a good safeguard against the temptations to excess in pleasure, in which Paris abounds. But there is no business which does not admit of some holiday, and all business necessitates commerce with mankind. *Apropos*, I was the other evening at the Duchesse de Tarascon's—a brilliant assembly, filled with minister's, senators, and courtiers. I heard your name mentioned."

"Mine?"

"Yes; Duplessis, the rising financier—who rather to my surprise was not only present among these official and decorated celebrities, but apparently quite at home among them—asked the Duchess if she had not seen you since your arrival at Paris. She replied, 'No; that though you were among her nearest connections, you had not called on her;" and bade Duplessis tell you that you were a *monstre* for not doing so. Whether or not Duplessis will take that liberty I know not; but you must pardon me if I do. She is a very charming woman, full of talent; and that stream of the world which reflects the stars, with all their

mythical influences on fortune, flows through her *salons*."

"I am not born under those stars. I am a Legitimist."

"I did not forget your political creed; but in England the leaders of opposition attend the *salons* of the Prime Minister. A man is not supposed to compromise his opinions because he exchanges social courtesies with those to whom his opinions are hostile. Pray excuse me if I am indiscreet; I speak as a traveller who asks for information—but do the Legitimists really believe that they best serve their cause by declining any mode of competing with its opponents? Would there not be a fairer chance for the ultimate victory of their principles if they made their talents and energies individually prominent—if they were known as skilful generals, practical statesmen, eminent diplomatists, brilliant writers?—could they combine—not to sulk and exclude themselves from the great battlefield of the world—but in their several ways to render themselves of such use to their country that some day or other, in one of those revolutionary crises to which France, alas! must long be subjected, they would find themselves able to turn the scale of undecided councils and conflicting jealousies?"

"Monsieur, we hope for the day when the Diviner Disposer of events will strike into the hearts of our fickle and erring countrymen the conviction that there will be no settled repose for France save under the sceptre of her rightful kings. But meanwhile we are—I see it more clearly since I have quitted Bretagne—we are a hopeless minority."

"Does not history tell us that the great changes of the world have been wrought by minorities? but on the one condition that the minorities shall not be hopeless? It is almost the other day that the Bonapartists were in a minority that their adversaries called hopeless, and the majority for the Emperor is now so preponderant that I tremble for his safety. When a majority becomes so vast that intellect disappears in the crowd, the date of its destruction commences; for by the law of reaction the minority is installed against it. It is the nature of things that minorities are always more intellectual than multitudes, and intellect is ever at work in sapping numerical force. What your party want is hope; because without hope there is no energy. I remember hearing my father say that when he met the Count de Chambord at Ems, that illustrious personage delivered himself of a *belle phrase* much admired by his partisans. The Emperor was then President of the Republic, in a very doubtful and dangerous position. France seemed on the verge of another convulsion. A certain distinguished politician recommended the Count de Chambord to hold himself ready to enter at once as a candidate for the throne. And the Count, with a benignant smile on his handsome face, answered, 'All wrecks come to the shore—the shore does not go to the wrecks.'"

"Beautifully said!" exclaimed the Marquis.

"Not if *Le beau est toujours le vrai.* My father, no inexperienced nor unwise politician, in repeating the royal words, remarked: 'The fallacy of the Count's argument is in its metaphor. A man is not a shore. Do you not think that the seamen on board the wrecks would be more grateful to him who did not complacently compare himself to a shore, but considered himself a human being like themselves, and risked his own life in a boat, even though it were a cockle-shell, in the chance of saving theirs?'"

Alain de Rochebriant was a brave man, with that intense sentiment of patriotism which characterizes Frenchmen of every rank and persuasion, unless they belong to the Internationalists; and without pausing to consider, he cried, "Your father was right."

The Englishman resumed: "Need I say, my dear Marquis, that I am not a Legitimist? I am not an Imperialist, neither am I an Orleanist, nor a Republican. Between all those political divisions it is for Frenchmen to make their choice, and for Englishmen to accept for France that government which France has established. I view things here as a simple observer. But it strikes me that if I were a Frenchman in your position, I should think myself unworthy my ancestors if I consented to be an insignificant looker-on."

"You are not in my position," said the Marquis, half mournfully, half haughtily, "and you can scarcely judge of it even in imagination."

"I need not much task my imagination; I judge of it by analogy. I was very much in

your position when I entered upon what I venture to call my career; and it is the curious similarity between us in circumstances that made me wish for your friendship when that similarity was made known to me by Lemercier, who is not less garrulous than the true Parisian usually is. Permit me to say that, like you, I was reared in some pride of no inglorious ancestry. I was reared also in the expectation of great wealth. Those expectations were not realized: my father had the fault of noble natures—generosity pushed to imprudence: he died poor and in debt. You retain the home of your ancestors; I had to resign mine."

The Marquis had felt deeply interested in this narrative, and as Graham now paused, took his hand and pressed it.

"One of our most eminent personages said to me about that time, 'Whatever a clever man of your age determines to do or to be, the odds are twenty to one that he has only to live on in order to do or to be it.' Don't you think he spoke truly? I think so."

"I scarcely know what to think," said Rochebriant; "I feel as if you had given me so rough a shake when I was in the midst of a full dream, that I am not yet quite sure whether I am asleep or awake."

Just as he said this, and towards the Paris end of the Champs Elysées, there was a halt, a sensation among the loungers round them: many of them uncovered in salute.

A man on the younger side of middle age, somewhat inclined to corpulence, with a very striking countenance, was riding slowly by. He returned the salutations he received with the careless dignity of a personage accustomed to respect, and then reined in his horse by the side of a barouche, and exchanged some words with a portly gentleman who was its sole occupant. The loungers, still halting, seemed to contemplate this parley—between him on horseback and him in the carriage—with very eager interest. Some put their hands behind their ears and pressed forward, as if trying to overhear what was said.

"I wonder," quoth Graham, "whether, with all his cleverness, the Prince has in any way decided what *he* means to do or to be."

"The Prince!" said Rochebriant, rousing himself from reverie; "what Prince?"

"Do you not recognize him by his wonderful likeness to the first Napoleon—him on horseback talking to Louvier, the great financier."

"Is that stout *bourgeois* in the carriage Louvier—my mortgagee, Louvier?"

"Your mortgagee, my dear Marquis? Well, he is rich enough to be a very lenient one upon pay-day."

"*Hein!*—I doubt his leniency," said Alain. "I have promised my *avoué* to meet him at dinner. Do you think I did wroug?"

"Wrong! of course not; he is likely to overwhelm you with civilities. Pray don't refuse if he gives you an invitation to his *soirée* next Saturday—I am going to it. One meets there the notabilities most interesting to study—artists, authors, politicians, especially those who call themselves Republicans. He and the Prince agree in one thing—viz., the cordial reception they give to the men who would destroy the state of things upon which Prince and financier both thrive. Hillo! here comes Lemercier on return from the Bois."

Lemercier's *coupé* stopped beside the footpath. "What tidings of the *Belle Inconnue?*" asked the Englishman.

"None; she was not there. But I am rewarded—such an adventure—a dame of the *haute volée*—I believe she is a duchess. She was walking with a lap-dog, a pure Pomeranian. A strange poodle flew at the Pomeranian, I drove off the poodle, rescued the Pomeranian, received the most gracious thanks, the sweetest smile—*femme superbe*, middle aged. I prefer women of forty. *Au revoir*, I am due at the club."

Alain felt a sensation of relief that Lemercier had not seen the lady in the pearl-colored dress, and quitted the Englishman with a lightened heart.

CHAPTER IV.

"*Piccola, piccola! com' è cortese!* another invitation from M. Louvier for next Saturday—*conversazione.*" This was said in Italian by an elderly lady bursting noisily into the room—elderly, yet with a youthful expression of face, owing perhaps to a pair of very vivacious black eyes. She was dressed, after a somewhat slatternly fashion, in a wrapper of crimson merino much the worse for

wear, a blue handkerchief twisted turban-like round her head, and her feet encased in list slippers. The person to whom she addressed herself was a young lady with dark hair, which, despite its evident redundance, was restrained into smooth glossy braids over the forehead, and at the crown of the small graceful head into the simple knot which Horace has described as "Spartan." Her dress contrasted the speaker's by as exquisite neatness. We have seen her before as the lady in the pearl-colored robe, but seen now at home she looks much younger. She was one of those whom, encountered in the streets or in society, one might guess to be married—probably a young bride; for thus seen there was about her an air of dignity and of self-possession which suits well with the ideal of chaste youthful matronage; and in the expression of the face there was a pensive thoughtfulness beyond her years. But as she now sat by the open window arranging flowers in a glass bowl, a book lying open on her lap, you would never have said, "What a handsome woman!" you would have said, "What a charming girl!" All about her was maidenly, innocent, and fresh. The dignity of her bearing was lost in household ease, the pensiveness of her expression in an untroubled serene sweetness.

Perhaps many of my readers may have known friends engaged in some absorbing cause of thought, and who are in the habit when they go out, especially if on solitary walks, to take that cause of thought with them. The friend may be an orator meditating his speech, a poet his verses, a lawyer a difficult case, a physician an intricate malady. If you have such a friend, and you observe him thus away from his home, his face will seem to you older and graver. He is absorbed in the care that weighs on him. When you see him in a holiday moment at his own fireside, the care is thrown aside; perhaps he mastered while abroad the difficulty that had troubled him; he is cheerful, pleasant, sunny. This appears to be very much the case with persons of genius. When in their own houses we usually find them very playful and childlike. Most persons of real genius, whatever they may seem out of doors, are very sweet-tempered at home, and sweet temper is sympathizing and genial in the intercourse of private life. Certainly, observing this girl as she now bends over the flowers, it would be difficult to believe her to be the Isaura Cicogna whose letters to Madame de Grantmesnil exhibit the doubts and struggles of an unquiet, discontented, aspiring mind. Only in one or two passages in those letters would you have guessed at the writer in the girl as we now see her.

It is in those passages where she expresses her love of harmony, and her repugnance to contest—those were characteristics you might have read in her face.

Certainly the girl is very lovely: what long dark eyelashes—what soft, tender, dark-blue eyes! now that she looks up and smiles, what a bewitching smile it is!—by what sudden play of rippling dimples the smile is enlivened and redoubled! Do you notice one feature? in very showy beauties it is seldom noticed; but I, being in my way a physiognomist, consider that it is always worth heeding as an index of character. It is the ear. Remark how delicately it is formed in her—none of that heaviness of lobe which is a sure sign of sluggish intellect and coarse perception. Hers is the artist's ear. Note next those hands—how beautifully shaped! small, but not doll-like hands—ready and nimble, firm and nervous hands, that could work for a helpmate. By no means very white, still less red, but somewhat embrowned as by the sun, such as you may see in girls reared in southern climates, and in her perhaps betokening an impulsive character which had not accustomed itself, when at sport in the open air, to the thraldom of gloves—very impulsive people even in cold climates seldom do.

In conveying to us by a few bold strokes an idea of the sensitive, quick-moved, warm-blooded Henry II., the most impulsive of the Plantagenets, his contemporary chronicler tells us that rather than imprison those active hands of his, even in hawking-gloves, he would suffer his falcon to fix its sharp claws into his wrist. No doubt there is a difference as to what is befitting between a burly bellicose creature like Henry II. and a delicate young lady like Isaura Cicogna; and one would not wish to see those dainty wrists of hers seamed and scarred by a falcon's claws. But a girl may not be less exquisitely feminine for slight heed of artificial prettinesses. Isaura had no need of pale bloodless hands to seem one of Nature's highest grade of gentlewomen even to

the most fastidious eyes. About her there was a charm apart from her mere beauty, and often disturbed instead of heightened by her mere intellect: it consisted in a combination of exquisite artistic refinement, and of a generosity of character by which refinement was animated into vigor and warmth.

The room, which was devoted exclusively to Isaura, had in it much that spoke of the occupant. That room, when first taken furnished, had a good deal of the comfortless showiness which belongs to ordinary furnished apartments in France, especially in the Parisian suburbs, chiefly let for the summer—thin limp muslin curtains that decline to draw, stiff mahogany chairs covered with yellow Utrecht velvet, a tall *secrétaire* in a dark corner, an oval buhl-table set in tawdry ormolu, islanded in the centre of a poor but gaudy Scotch carpet, and but one other table of dull walnut-wood, standing clothless before a sofa to match the chairs; the eternal ormolu clock flanked by the two eternal ormolu candelabra on the dreary mantelpiece. Some of this garniture had been removed, others softened into cheeriness and comfort. The room somehow or other—thanks partly to a very moderate expenditure in pretty twills with pretty borders, gracefully simple table-covers, with one or two additional small tables and easy-chairs, two simple vases filled with flowers—thanks still more to a nameless skill in re-arrangement, and the disposal of the slight nick-nacks and well-bound volumes, which, even in travelling, women who have cultivated the pleasures of taste carry about with them,—had been coaxed into that quiet harmony, that tone of consistent subdued color, which corresponded with the characteristics of the inmate. Most people might have been puzzled where to place the piano, a semi-grand, so as not to take up too much space in the little room; but where it was placed it seemed so at home that you might have supposed the room had been built for it.

There are two kinds of neatness—one is too evident, and makes everything about it seem trite and cold and stiff, and another kind of neatness disappears from our sight in a satisfied sense of completeness—like some exquisite, simple, finished style of writing—an Addison's or a St. Pierre's.

This last sort of neatness belonged to Isaura, and brought to mind the well-known line of Catullus when on recrossing his threshold he invokes its welcome—a line thus not inelegantly translated by Leigh Hunt—

"Smile every dimple on the cheek of Home."

I entreat the reader's pardon for this long descriptive digression; but Isaura is one of those characters which are called many-sided, and therefore not very easy to comprehend. She gives us one side of her character in her correspondence with Madame de Grantmesnil, and another side of it in her own home with her Italian companion—half nurse, half *chaperon.*

"Monsieur Louvier is indeed very courteous," said Isaura, looking up from the flowers with the dimpled smile we have noticed. "But I think, *Madre*, that we should do well to stay at home on Saturday—not peacefully, for I owe you your revenge at *Euchre.*"

"You can't mean it, *Piccola!*" exclaimed the Signora in evident consternation. "Stay at home!—why stay at home? *Euchre* is very well when there is nothing else to do; but change is pleasant—*le bon Dieu* likes it—

'Ne caldo ne gelo
Resta mai in cielo.'

And such beautiful ices one gets at M. Louvier's. Did you taste the Pistachio ice? What fine rooms, and so well lit up!—I adore light. And the ladies so beautifully dressed—one sees the fashions. Stay at home—play at *Euchre* indeed! *Piccola*, you cannot be so cruel to yourself—you are young."

"But, dear *Madre*, just consider—we are invited because we are considered professional singers; your reputation as such is of course established—mine is not; but still I shall be asked to sing as I was asked before; and you know Dr. C—— forbids me to do so except to a very small audience; and it is so ungracious always to say 'No;' and besides, did you not yourself say, when we came away last time from Mr. Louvier's, that it was very dull—that you knew nobody—and that the ladies had such superb toilettes that you felt mortified—and——"

"*Zitto!* "*zitto!* you talk idly, *Piccola*—very idly. I was mortified then in my old black Lyons silk; but have I not bought since then my beautiful Greek jacket—scarlet and

gold lace? and why should I buy it if I am not to show it?"

"But, dear *Madre*, the jacket is certainly very handsome, and will make an effect in a little dinner at the Savarins or Mrs. Morley's. But in a great formal reception like M. Louvier's will it not look——"

"Splendid!" interrupted the Signora.

"But *singolare*."

"So much the better; did not that great English lady were such a jacket, and did not every one admire her—*più tosto invidia che compassione?*"

Isaura sighed. Now the jacket of the signora was a subject of disquietude to her friend. It so happened that a young English lady of the highest rank and the rarest beauty had appeared at M. Louvier's, and indeed generally in the *beau monde* of Paris, in a Greek jacket that became her very much. That jacket had fascinated, at M. Louvier's, the eyes of the signora. But of this Isaura was unaware. The signora, on returning home from M. Louvier's, had certainly lamented much over the *mesquin* appearance of her old-fashioned Italian habiliments compared with the brilliant toilette of the gay Parisiennes; and Isaura—quite woman enough to sympathize with woman in such womanly vanities—proposed the next day to go with the signora to one of the principal *couturières* of Paris, and adapt the signora's costume to the fashions of the place. But the signora having pre-determined on a Greek jacket, and knowing by instinct that Isaura would be disposed to thwart that splendid predilection, had artfully suggested that it would be better to go to the *couturière* with Madame Savarin, as being a more experienced adviser,—and the *coupé* only held two.

As Madame Savarin was about the same age as the signora, and dressed as became her years, and in excellent taste, Isaura thought this an admirable suggestion; and pressing into her *chaperon's* hand a *billet de banque* sufficient to re-equip her *cap-à-pie*, dismissed the subject from her mind. But the signora was much too cunning to submit her passion for the Greek jacket to the discouraging comments of Madame Savarin. Monopolizing the *coupé*, she became absolute mistress of the situation. She went to no fashionable *couturières*. She went to a *magasin* that she had seen advertised in the *Petites Affiches* as supplying superb costumes for fancy balls and amateur performers in private theatricals. She returned home triumphant, with a jacket still more dazzling to the eye than that of the English lady.

When Isaura first beheld it, she drew back in a sort of superstitious terror, as of a comet or other blazing portent.

"*Cosa stupenda!*" — (stupendous thing!) She might well be dismayed when the signora proposed to appear thus attired in M. Louvier's *salon*. What might be admired as coquetry of dress in a young beauty of rank so great that even a vulgarity in her would be called *distinguée*, was certainly an audacious challenge of ridicule in the elderly *ci-devant* music-teacher.

But how could Isaura, how can any one of common humanity, say to a woman resolved upon wearing a certain dress, "You are not young and handsome enough for that?"—Isaura could only murmur, "For many reasons I would rather stay at home, dear *Madre*."

"Ah! I see you are ashamed of me," said the signora, in softened tones; "very natural. When the nightingale sings no more, she is only an ugly brown bird;" and therewith the Signora Venosta seated herself submissively, and began to cry.

On this Isaura sprang up, wound her arms round the signora's neck, soothed her with coaxing, kissed and petted her, and ended by saying, "Of course we will go;" and, "but let me choose you another dress—a dark-green velvet trimmed with blonde—blonde becomes you so well."

"No, no—I hate green velvet; anybody can wear that. *Piccola*, I am not clever like thee; I cannot amuse myself like thee with books. I am in a foreign land. I have a poor head, but I have a big heart" (another burst of tears); "and that big heart is set on my beautiful Greek jacket."

"Dearest *Madre*," said Isaura, half weeping too, "forgive me; you are right. The Greek jacket is splendid; I shall be so pleased to see you wear it. Poor *Madre*—so pleased to think that in the foreign land you are not without something that pleases *you*."

CHAPTER V.

CONFORMABLY with his engagement to meet M. Louvier, Alain found himself on the day and at the hour named in M. Gandrin's *salon*. On this occasion Madame Gandrin did not appear. Her husband was accustomed to give *aîners d'hommes*. The great man had not yet arrived. "I think, Marquis," said M. Gandrin, "that you will not regret having followed my advice: my representations have disposed Louvier to regard you with much favor, and he is certainly flattered by being permitted to make your personal acquaintance."

The *avoué* had scarcely finished this little speech, when M. Louvier was announced. He entered with a beaming smile, which did not detract from his imposing presence. His flatterers had told him that he had a look of Louis Philippe; therefore he had sought to imitate the dress and the *bonhomie* of that monarch of the middle class. He wore a wig, elaborately piled up, and shaped his whiskers in royal harmony with his royal wig. Above all, he studied that social frankness of manner with which the able sovereign dispelled awe of his presence or dread of his astuteness. Decidedly he was a man very pleasant to converse and to deal with—so long as there seemed to him something to gain and nothing to lose by being pleasant. He returned Alain's bow by a cordial offer of both expansive hands, into the grasp of which the hands of the aristocrat utterly disappeared. "Charmed to make your acquaintance, Marquis—still more charmed if you will let me be useful during your *séjour* at Paris. *Ma foi*, excuse my bluntness, but you are a *fort beau garçon*. Monsieur, your father was a handsome man, but you beat him hollow. Gandrin, my friend, would not you and I give half our fortunes for one year of this fine fellow's youth spent at Paris? *Peste!* what love letters we should have, with no need to buy them by *billets de banque!*" Thus he ran on, much to Alain's confusion, till dinner was announced. Then there was something *grandiose* in the frank *bourgeois* style wherewith he expanded his napkin and twisted one end into his waistcoat—it was so many a renunciation of the fashions which a man so *répandu* in all circles might be supposed to follow; as if he were both too great and too much in earnest for such frivolities. He was evidently a sincere *bon vivant*, and M. Gandrin had no less evidently taken all requisite pains to gratify his taste. The Montrachet served with the oysters was of precious vintage. That *vin de Madère* which accompanied the *potage à la bisque* would have contented an American. And how radiant became Louvier's face, when amongst the *entrés* he came upon *laitances de carpes!* "The best thing in the world," he cried, "and one gets it so seldom since the old Rocher de Cancale has lost its renown. At private houses what does one get now—*blanc de poulet*—flavorless trash. After all, Gandrin, when we lose the love-letters, it is some consolation that *laitances de carpes* and *sautés de foie gras* are still left to fill up the void in our hearts. Marquis, heed my counsel; cultivate betimes the taste for the table; that and whist are the sole resources of declining years. You never met my old friend Talleyrand—ah, no! he was long before your time. He cultivated both, but he made two mistakes. No man's intellect is perfect on all sides. He confined himself to one meal a-day, and he never learned to play well at whist. Avoid his errors, my young friend—avoid them. Gandrin, I guess this pine-apple is English—it is superb."

"You are right—a present from the Marquis of H——"

"Ah! instead of a fee, I wager. The Marquis gives nothing for nothing, dear man! Droll people the English. You have never visited England, I presume, *cher* Rochebriant?"

The affable financier had already made vast progress in familiarity with his silent fellow-guest.

When the dinner was over and the three men had re-entered the *salon* for coffee and liqueurs, Gandrin left Louvier and Alain alone, saying he was going to his cabinet for cigars which he could recommend. Then Louvier, lightly patting the Marquis on the shoulder, said with what the French call *effusion*,—"My dear Rochebriant, your father and I did not quite understand each other. He took a tone of *grand seigneur* that sometimes wounded me; and I in turn was perhaps too rude in asserting my rights—as creditor, shall I say?—no, as fellow-citizen; and Frenchmen are so vain, so over-susceptible—fire up at a word—take offence when none is meant. We two, my dear boy, should be superior to such national foibles.

Bref—I have a mortgage on your lands. Why should that thought mar our friendship? At my age, though I am not yet old, one is flattered if the young like us—pleased if we can oblige them, and remove from their career any little obstacle in its way. Gandrin tells me you wish to consolidate all the charges on your estate into one on a lower rate of interest. Is it so?"

"I am so advised," said the Marquis.

"And very rightly advised; come and talk with me about it some day next week. I hope to have a large sum of money set free in a few days. Of course, mortgages on land don't pay like speculations at the Bourse; but I am rich enough to please myself. We will see—we will see."

Here Gandrin returned with the cigars; but Alain at that time never smoked, and Louvier excused himself, with a laugh and a sly wink, on the plea that he was going to pay his respects—as doubtless that *joli garçon* was going to do, likewise—to a *belle dame* who did not reckon the smell of tobacco among the perfumes of Houbigant or Arabia.

"Meanwhile," added Louvier, turning to Gandrin, "I have something to say to you on business about the contract for that new street of mine. No hurry—after our young friend has gone to his 'assignation.'"

Alain could not misinterpret the hint; and in a few moments took leave of his host more surprised than disappointed that the financier had not invited him, as Graham had assumed he would, to his *soirée* the following evening.

When Alain was gone, Louvier's jovial manner disappeared also, and became bluffly rude rather than bluntly cordial.

"Gandrie, what did you mean by saying that that young man was no *muscadin? Muscadin—aristocrate*—offensive from top to toe."

"You amaze me—you seemed to take him so cordially."

"And pray, were you too blind to remark with what cold reserve he responded to my condescensions? How he winced when I called him Rochebriant! how he colored when I called him 'dear boy!' These aristocrats think we ought to thank them on our knees when they take our money, and"—here Louvier's face darkened—"seduce our women."

"Monsieur Louvier, in all France I do not know a greater aristocrat than yourself."

I don't know whether M. Gandrin meant that speech as a compliment, but M. Louvier took it as such—laughed complacently and rubbed his hands. "Ay, ay, *millionaries* are the real aristocrats, for they have power, as my *beau Marquis* will soon find. I must bid you good-night. Of course I shall see Madame Gandrin and yourself to-morrow. Prepare for a motley gathering—lots of democrats and foreigners, with artists and authors, and such creatures."

"Is that the reason why you did not invite the Marquis?"

"To be sure; I would not shock so pure a Legitimist by contact with the sons of the people, and make him still colder to myself. No; when he comes to my house he shall meet lions and *viveurs* of the *haut ton*, who will play into my hands by teaching him how to ruin himself in the quickest manner and in the *genre Régence*. *Bon soir, mon vieux.*"

CHAPTER VI.

THE next night Graham in vain looked round for Alain in M. Louvier's *salons*, and missed his high-bred mien and melancholy countenance. M. Louvier had been for some four years a childless widower, but his receptions were not the less numerously attended, nor his establishment less magnificently *monté* for the absence of a presiding lady: very much the contrary; it was noticeable how much he had increased his status and prestige as a social personage since the death of his unlamented spouse.

To say truth, she had been rather a heavy drag on his triumphal car. She had been the heiress of a man who had amassed a great deal of money; not in the higher walks of commerce, but in a retail trade.

Louvier himself was the son of a rich money-lender; he had entered life with an ample fortune and an intense desire to be admitted into those more brilliant circles in which fortunes can be dissipated with *éclat*. He might not have obtained this object but for the friendly countenance of a young noble who was then

"The glass of fashion and the mould of form."

But this young noble, of whom later we shall

hear more, came suddenly to grief; and when the money-lender's son lost that potent protector, the dandies, previously so civil, showed him a very cold shoulder.

Louvier then became an ardent democrat, and recruited the fortune he had impaired by the aforesaid marriage, launched into colossal speculations, and became enormously rich. His aspirations for social rank now revived, but his wife sadly interfered with them. She was thrifty by nature; sympathized little with her husband's genius for accumulation; always said he would end in a hospital; hated Republicans; despised authors and artists; and by the ladies of the *beau monde* was pronounced common and vulgar.

So long as she lived, it was impossible for Louvier to realize his ambition of having one of the *salons* which at Paris establish celebrity and position. He could not then command those advantages of wealth which he especially coveted. He was eminently successful in doing this now. As soon as she was safe in Père la Chaise, he enlarged his hotel by the purchase and annexation of an adjoining house; redecorated and refurnished it, and in this task displayed, it must be said to his credit, or to that of the administrators he selected for the purpose, a nobleness of taste rarely exhibited now-a-days. His collection of pictures was not large, and consisted exclusively of the French school, ancient and modern, for in all things Louvier affected the patriot. But each of those pictures was a gem; such Watteaus, such Greuzes, such landscapes by Patel, and, above all, such masterpieces by Ingrès, Horace Vernet, and Delaroche, were worth all the doubtful originals of Flemish and Italian art which make the ordinary boast of private collectors.

These pictures occupied two rooms of moderate size, built for their reception, and lighted from above. The great *salon* to which they led contained treasures scarcely less precious; the walls were covered with the richest silks which the looms of Lyons could produce. Every piece of furniture here was a work of art in its way: console-tables of Florentine mosaic, inlaid with pearl and lapislazuli; cabinets in which the exquisite designs of the *renaissance* were carved in ebony; colossal vases of Russian malachite, but wrought by French artists. The very nick-nacks scattered carelessly about the room might have been admired in the cabinets of the Palazzo Pitti. Beyond this room lay the *salle de danse*, its ceiling painted by ——, supported by white marble columns, the glazed balcony and the angles of the room filled with tiers of exotics. In the dining-room, on the same floor, on the other side of the landing-place, were stored in glazed buffets, not only vessels and salvers of plate, silver and gold, but, more costly still, matchless specimens of Sèvres and Limoges, and mediæval varieties of Venetian glass. On the ground-floor, which opened on the lawn of a large garden, Louvier had his suite of private apartments, furnished, as he said, "simply, according to English notions of comfort." Englishmen would have said, "according to French notions of luxury." Enough of these details, which a writer cannot give without feeling himself somewhat vulgarized in doing so, but without a loose general idea of which a reader would not have an accurate conception of something not vulgar—of something grave, historical, possibly tragical, the existence of a Parisian *millionnaire* at the date of this narrative.

The evidence of wealth was everywhere manifest at M. Louvier's, but it was everywhere refined by an equal evidence of taste. The apartments devoted to hospitality ministered to the delighted study of artists, to whom free access was given, and of whom two or three might be seen daily in the "show-rooms," copying pictures or taking sketches of rare articles of furniture or effects for palatian interiors.

Among the things which rich English visitors of Paris most coveted to see was M. Louvier's hotel; and few among the richest left it without a sigh of envy and despair. Only in such London houses as belong to a Sutherland or a Holford could our metropolis exhibit a splendor as opulent and a taste as refined.

M. Louvier had his set evenings for popular assemblies. At these were entertained the Liberals of every shade, from *tricolor* to *rouge*, with the artists and writers most in vogue, *pêle-mêle* with decorated diplomatists, ex-ministers, Orleanists, and Republicans, distinguished foreigners, plutocrats of the Bourse, and lions male and female from the arid nurse of that race, the Chaussée d'Antin. Of his

more select reunions something will be said later.

"And how does this poor Paris metamorphosed please Monsieur Vane?" asked a Frenchman with a handsome intelligent countenance, very carefully dressed, though in a somewhat bygone fashion, and carrying off his tenth lustrum with an air too sprightly to evince any sense of the weight.

This gentleman, the Vicomte de Brézé, was of good birth, and had a legitimate right to his title of Vicomte, which is more than can be said of many vicomtes one meets at Paris. He had no other property, however, than a principal share in an influential journal, to which he was a lively and sparkling contributor. In his youth, under the reign of Louis Philippe, he had been a chief among literary exquisites, and Balzac was said to have taken him more than once as his model for those brilliant young *vauriens* who figure in the great novelist's comedy of "Human Life." The Vicomte's fashion expired with the Orleanist dynasty.

"Is it possible, my dear Vicomte," answered Graham, "not to be pleased with a capital so marvellously embellished?"

"Embellished it may be to foreign eyes," said the Vicomte, sighing, "but not improved to the taste of a Parisian like me. I miss the dear Paris of old—the streets associated with my *beaux jours* are no more. Is there not something drearily monotonous in these interminable perspectives? How frightfully the way lengthens before one's eyes! In the twists and curves of the old Paris one was relieved from the pain of seeing how far one had to go from one spot to another—each tortuous street had a separate idiosyncrasy; what picturesque diversities, what interesting recollections—all swept away! *Mon Dieu!* and what for? Miles of florid *façades* staring and glaring at one with goggle-eyed pitiless windows. House-rents trebled; and the consciousness that, if you venture to grumble, underground railways, like conceded volcanoes, can burst forth on you at any moment with an eruption of bayonets and muskets. This *maudit empire* seeks to keep its hold on France much as a *grand seigneur* seeks to enchain a nymph of the ballet, tricks her out in finery and baubles, and insures her infidelity the moment he fails to satisfy her whims."

"Vicomte," answered Graham, "I have had the honor to know you since I was a small boy at a preparatory school home for the holidays, and you were a guest at my father's country-house. You were then *fêté* as one of the most promising writers among the young men of the day, especially favored by the princes of the reigning family. I shall never forget the impression made on me by your brilliant appearance and your no less brilliant talk."

"*Ah! ces beaux jours! ce bon Louis Philippe, ce cher petit Joinville,*" sighed the Vicomte.

"But at that day you compared *le bon* Louis Phillippe to Robert Macaire. You described all his sons, including, no doubt, *ce cher petit Joinville*, in terms of resentful contempt, as so many plausible *gamins* whom Robert Macaire was training to cheat the public in the interest of the family firm. I remember my father saying to you in answer. 'No royal house in Europe has more sought to develop the literature of an epoch, and to signalize its representatives by social respect and official honors, than that of the Orleans dynasty; you, M. de Brézé, do but imitate your elders in seeking to destroy the dynasty under which you flourish; should you succeed, you *hommes de plume* will be the first sufferers and the loudest complainers.'"

"*Cher Monsieur Vane,*" said the Vicomte, smiling complacently, "your father did me great honor in classing me with Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas, Emile de Girardin, and the other stars of the Orleanist galaxy, including our friend here, M. Savarin. A very superior man was your father."

"And," said Savarin, who, being an Oleanist, had listened to Graham's speech with an approving smile—"and if I remember right, my dear De Brézé, no one was more brilliantly severe than yourself on poor De Lamartine and the Republic that succeeded Louis Philippe: no one more emphatically expressed the yearning desire for another Napoleon to restore order at home and renown abroad. Now you have got another Napoleon."

"And I want change for my Napoleon," said De Brézé, laughing.

"My dear Vicomte," said Graham, "one thing we may all grant, that in culture and intellect you are far superior to the mass of your fellow-Parisians; that you are therefore a favorable type of their political character."

"*Ah, mon cher, vous êtes trop aimable.*"

"And therefore I venture to say this, if the archangel Gabriel were permitted to descend to Paris and form the best government for France that the wisdom of seraph could devise, it would not be two years—I doubt if it would be six months—before out of this Paris, which you call the *Foyer des Idées*, would emerge a powerful party, adorned by yourself and other *hommes de plume*, in favor of a revolution for the benefit of *ce bon* Satan and *ce cher petit* Beelzebub."

"What a pretty vein of satire you have, *mon cher!*" said the Vicomte, good-humoredly; "there is a sting of truth in your witticism. Indeed, I must send you some articles of mine in which I have said much the same thing—*les beaux esprits se rencontrent.* The fault of us French is impatience—desire of change; but then it is that desire which keeps the world going and retains our place at the head of it. However, at this time we are all living too fast for our money to keep up with it, and too slow for our intellect not to flag. We vie with each other on the road to ruin, for in literature all the old paths to fame are shut up."

Here a tall gentleman, with whom the Vicomte had been conversing before he accosted Vane, and who had remained beside De Brézé listening in silent attention to this colloquy, interposed, speaking in the slow voice of one accustomed to measure his words, and with a slight but unmistakable German accent—"There is that, M. de Brézé, which makes one think gravely of what you say so lightly. Viewing things with the unprejudiced eyes of a foreigner, I recognize much for which France should be grateful to the Emperor. Under his sway her material resources have been marvellously augmented: her commerce has been placed by the treaty with England on sounder foundations, and is daily exhibiting richer life; her agriculture has made a prodigious advance wherever it has allowed room for capitalists, and escaped from the curse of petty allotments and peasant proprietors—a curse which would have ruined any country less blessed by Nature; turbulent factions have been quelled; internal order mantained; the external prestige of France, up at least to the date of the Mexican war, increased to an extent that might satisfy even a Frenchman's *amour propre;* and her advance in civilization has been manifested by the rapid creation of a naval power which should put England on her mettle. But, on the other hand——"

"Ay, on the other hand," said the Vicomte.

"On the other hand there are in the imperial syetem two causes of decay and of rot silently at work. They may not be the faults of the Emperor, but they are such misfortunes as may cause the fall of the Empire. The first is an absolute divorce between the political system and the intellectual culture of the nation. The throne and the system rest on universal suffrage—on a suffrage which gives to classes the most ignorant a power that preponderates over all the healthful elements of knowledge. It is the tendency of all ignorant multitudes to personify themselves, as it were, in one individual. They cannot comprehend you when you argue for a principle; they do comprehend you when you talk of a name. The Emperor Napoleon is to them a name; and the prefects and officials who influence their votes are paid for incorporating all principles in the shibboleth of that single name. You have thus sought the well-spring of a political system in the deepest stratum of popular ignorance. To rid popular ignorance of its normal revolutionary bias, the rural peasants are indoctrinated with the conservatism that comes from the fear which appertains to property. They have their roods of land or their shares in a national loan. Thus you estrange the crassitude of an ignorant democracy still more from the intelligence of the educated classes by combining it with the most selfish and abject of all the apprehensions that are ascribed to aristocracy and wealth. What is thus embedded in the depths of your society makes itself shown on the surface. Napoleon III. has been compared to Augustus; and there are many startling similitudes between them in character and in fate.

"Each succeeds to the heritage of a great name that had contrived to unite autocracy with the popular cause. Each subdued all rival competitors, and inaugurated despotic rule in the name of freedom. Each mingled enough of sternness with ambitious will to stain with bloodshed the commencement of his power; but it would be an absurd injustice to fix the same degree of condemnation on the *coup d'état* as humanity fixes on the earlier cruelties of Augustus. Each, once firm in his

seat, became mild and clement: Augustus perhaps from policy, Napoleon III. from a native kindliness of disposition which no fair critic of character can fail to acknowledge. Enough of similitudes; now for one salient difference. Observe how earnestly Augustus strove, and how completely he succeeded in the task, to rally round him all the leading intellects in every grade and of every party—the followers of Antony, the friends of Brutus—every great captain, every great statesman, every great writer, every man who could lend a ray of mind to his own Julian constellation, and make the age of Augustus an era in the annals of human intellect and genius. But this has not been the good fortune of your Emperor. The result of his system has been the suppression of intellect in every department. He has rallied round him not one great statesman; his praises are hymned by not one great poet. The *célebrités* of a former day stand aloof; or, preferring exile to constrained allegiance, assail him with unremitting missiles from their asylum in foreign shores. His reign is sterile of new *célébrités*.

"The few that arise enlist themselves against him. Whenever he shall venture to give full freedom to the press and to the legislature, the intellect thus suppressed or thus hostile will burst forth in collected volume. His partisans have not been trained and disciplined to meet such assailants. They will be as weak as no doubt they will be violent. And the worst is, that the intellect thus rising in mass against him will be warped and distorted, like captives who, being kept in chains, exercise their limbs, on escaping, in vehement jumps, without definite object. The directors of emancipated opinion may thus be terrible enemies to the Imperial Government, but they will be very unsafe councillors to France. Concurrently with this divorce between the Imperial system and the national intellect—a divorce so complete that even your *salons* have lost their wit, and even your caricatures their point—a corruption of manners which the Empire, I own, did not originate, but inherit, has become so common that every one owns and nobody blames it. The gorgeous ostentation of the Court has perverted the habits of the people. The intelligence obstructed from other vents betakes itself to speculating for a fortune; and the greed of gain and the passion for show are sapping the noblest elements of the old French manhood. Public opinion stamps with no opprobrium a minister or favorite who profits by a job; and I fear that you will find that jobbing pervades all your administrative departments."

"All very true," said De Brézé, with a shrug of the shoulders and in a tone of levity that seemed to ridicule the assertion he volunteered; "Virtue and honor banished from courts and *salons* and the cabinets of authors, ascend to fairer heights in the attics of *ouvriers*."

"The *ouvriers*, *ouvriers* of Paris!" cried this terrible German.

"Ay, Monsieur le Comte, what can you say against our *ouvriers?* A German count cannot condescend to learn anything about *ces petites gens*."

"Monsieur," replied the German, "in the eyes of a statesman there are no *petites gens*, and in those of a philosopher no *petites choses*. We in Germany have too many difficult problems affecting our working classes to solve, not to have induced me to glean all the information I can as to the *ouvriers* of Paris. They have among them men of aspirations as can animate the souls of philosophers and poets, perhaps not the less noble because common-sense and experience cannot follow their flight. But, as a body, the *ouvriers* of Paris have not been elevated in political morality by the benevolent aim of the Emperor to find them ample work and good wages independent of the natural laws that regulate the markets of labor. Accustomed thus to consider the State bound to maintain them, the moment the State fails in that impossible task, they will accommodate their honesty to a rush upon property under the name of social reform.

"Have you not noticed how largely increased within the last few years is the number of those who cry out, '*La Propriété, c'est le vol?*' Have you considered the rapid growth of the International Association? I do not say that for all these evils the Empire is exclusively responsible. To a certain degree they are found in all rich communities, especially where democracy is more or less in the ascendant. To a certain extent they exist in the large towns of Germany; they are conspicuously increasing in England; they are acknowledged to be dangerous in the United

States of America; they are, I am told on good authority, making themselves visible with the spread of civilization in Russia. But under the French Empire they have become glaringly rampant, and I venture to predict that the day is not far off when the rot at work throughout all layers and strata of French society will insure a fall of the fabric at the sound of which the world will ring.

"There is many a fair and stately tree which continues to throw out its leaves and rear its crest till suddenly the wind smites it, and then, and not till then, the trunk which seems so solid is found to be but the rind to a mass of crumbled powder."

"Monsieur le Comte," said the Vicomte, "you are a severe critic and a lugubrious prophet. But a German is so safe from revolution that he takes alarm at the stir of movement which is the normal state of the French *esprit*."

"French *esprit* may soon evaporate into Parisian *bétise*. As to Germany being safe from revolution, allow me to repeat a saying of Goethe's—but has M. le Vicomte ever heard of Goethe?"

"Goethe, of course—*très joli écrivain*."

"Goethe said to some one who was making much the same remark as yourself, 'We Germans are in a state of revolution now, but we do things so slowly that it will be a hundred years before we Germans shall find it out. But when completed, it will be the greatest revolution society has yet seen, and will last like the other revolutions that, beginning, scarce noticed, in Germany have transformed the world.'"

"*Diable*, M. le Comte! Germans transformed the world! What revolutions do you speak of?"

"The invention of gunpowder, the invention of printing, and the expansion of a monk's quarrel with his Pope into the Lutheran revolution."

Here the German paused, and asked the Vicomte to introduce him to Vane, which De Brézé did by the title of Count von Rudesheim. On hearing Vane's name, the Count inquired if he were related to the orator and statesman, George Graham Vane, whose opinions, uttered in Parliament, were still authoritative among German thinkers. This compliment to his deceased father immensely gratified, but at the same time considerably surprised the Englishman. His father, no doubt, had been a man of much influence in the British House of Commons—a very weighty speaker, and, while in office, a first-rate administrator; but Englishmen know what a House of Commons reputation is—how fugitive, how little cosmopolitan; and that a German count should ever have heard of his father, delighted, but amazed him. In stating himself to be the son of George Graham Vane, he intimated not only the delight, but the amaze, with the frank *savoir vivre* which was one of his salient characteristics.

"Sir," replied the German, speaking in very correct English, but still with his national accent, "every German reared to political service studies England as the school for practical thought distinct from impracticable theories. Long may you allow us to do so; only excuse me one remark; never let the selfish element of the practical supersede the generous element. Your father never did so in his speeches, and therefore we admired him. At the present day we don't so much care to study English speeches. They may be insular—they are not European. I honor England; Heaven grant that you may not be making sad mistakes in the belief that you can long remain England if you cease to be European." Herewith the German bowed, not uncivilly—on the contrary, somewhat ceremoniously — and disappeared with a Prussian Secretary of Embassy, whose arm he linked in his own, into a room less frequented.

"Vicomte, who and what is your German count?" asked Vane.

"A solemn pedant," answered the lively Vicomte—"a German count, *que voulez-vous de plus?*"

CHAPTER VII.

A LITTLE later Graham found himself alone amongst the crowd. Attracted by the sound of music, he had strayed into one of the rooms whence it came, and in which, though his range of acquaintance at Paris, was for an Englishman, large and somewhat miscellaneous, he recognized no familiar countenance. A lady was playing the pianoforte—playing remarkably well—with accurate science, with that

equal lightness and strength of finger which produces brilliancy of execution. But to appreciate her music one should be musical one's self. It wanted the charm that fascinates the uninitiated. The guests in the room were musical connoisseurs—a class with whom Graham Vane had nothing in common. Even if he had been more capable of enjoying the excellence of the player's performance, the glance he directed towards her would have sufficed to chill him into indifference. She was not young, and with prominent features and puckered skin, was twisting her face into strange sentimental grimaces, as if terribly evercome by the beauty and pathos of her own melodies. To add to Vane's displeasure, she was dressed in a costume wholly antagonistic to his views of the becoming—in a Greek jacket of gold and scarlet, contrasted by a Turkish turban.

Muttering "What she-mountebank have we here?" he sank into a chair behind the door, and fell into an absorbed reverie. From this he was aroused by the cessation of the music, and the hum of subdued approbation by which it was followed. Above the hum swelled the impossing voice of M. Louvier, as he rose from a seat on the other side of the piano, by which his bulky form had been partially concealed.

"Bravo!" perfectly played—excellent! Can we not persuade your charming young countrywoman to gratify us even by a single song?" Then turning aside and addressing some one else invisible to Graham, he said, "Does that tyrannical doctor still compel you to silence, Mademoiselle?"

A voice so sweetly modulated, that if there were any sarcasm in the words it was lost in the softness of pathos, answered, "Nay, M. Louvier, he rather overtasks the words at my command in thankfulness to those who, like yourself, so kindly regard me as something else than a singer."

It was not the she-mountebank who thus spoke. Graham rose and looked round with instinctive curiosity. He met the face that he said had haunted him. She too had risen, standing near the piano, with one hand tenderly resting on the she-mountebank's scarlet and gilded shoulder:—the face that haunted him, and yet with a difference. There was a faint blush on the clear pale cheek, a soft yet playful light in the grave dark-blue eyes, which had not been visible in the countenance of the young lady in the pearl-colored robe. Graham did not hear Louvier's reply, though no doubt it was loud enough for him to hear. He sank again into reverie. Other guests now came into the room, among them Frank Morley, styled Colonel—(eminent military titles in the United States do not always denote eminent military services)—a wealthy American, and his sprightly and beautiful wife. The Colonel was a clever man, rather stiff in his deportment, and grave in speech, but by no means without a vein of dry humor. By the French he was esteemed a high-bred specimen of the kind of *grand seigneur* which democratic republics engender. He spoke French like a Parisian, had an imposing presence, and spent a great deal of money with the elegance of a man of taste and the generosity of a man of heart. His high breeding was not quite so well understood by the English, because the English are apt to judge breeding by little conventional rules not observed by the American Colonel. He had a slight nasal twang, and introduced "sir" with redundant ceremony in addressing Englishmen, however intimate he might be with them, and had the habit (perhaps with a sly intention to startle or puzzle them) of adorning his style of conversation with quaint Americanisms.

Nevertheless, the genial amiability and the inherent dignity of his character made him acknowledged as a thorough gentleman by every Englishman, however conventional in tastes, who became admitted into his intimate acquaintance.

Mrs. Morley, ten or twelve years younger than her husband, had no nasal twang, and employed no Americanisms in her talk, which was frank, lively, and at times eloquent. She had a great ambition to be esteemed of a masculine understanding: Nature unkindly frustrated that ambition in rendering her a model of feminine grace. Graham was intimately acquainted with Colonel Morley; and with Mrs. Morley had contracted one of those cordial friendships, which, perfectly free alike from polite flirtation and Platonic attachment, do sometimes spring up between persons of opposite sexes without the slightest danger of changing their honest character into morbid sentimentality or unlawful passion. The Mor-

leys stopped to accost Graham, but the lady had scarcely said three words to him, before, catching sight of the haunting face, she darted towards it. Her husband, less emotional, bowed at the distance, and said, "To my taste, sir, the Signorina Cicogna is the loveliest girl in the present *bee*,* and full of mind, sir."

"Singing mind," said Graham, sarcastically and in the ill-natured impulse of a man striving to check his inclination to admire.

"I have not heard her sing," replied the American, drily; "and the words 'singing mind' are doubtless accurately English, since you employ them; but at Boston the collocation would be deemed barbarous. You fly off the handle. The epithet, sir, is not in concord with the substantive."

"Boston would be in the right, my dear Colonel. I stand rebuked; mind has little to do with singing."

"I take leave to deny that, sir. You fire into the wrong flock, and would not hazard the remark if you had conversed as I have with Signorina Cicogna."

Before Graham could answer, Signorina Cicogna stood before him leaning lightly on Mrs. Morley's arm.

"Frank, you must take us into the refreshment-room," said Mrs. Morley to her husband; and then, turning to Graham, added, "Will you help to make way for us?"

Graham bowed, and offered his arm to the fair speaker.

"No," said she, taking her husband's. "Of course you know the Signorina, or, as we usually call her, Mademoiselle Cicogna. No? Allow me to present you—Mr. Graham Vane—Mademoiselle Cicogna. Mademoiselle speaks English like a native."

And thus abruptly Graham was introduced to the owner of the haunting face. He had lived too much in the great world all his life to retain the innate shyness of an Englishman, but he certainly was confused and embarrassed when his eyes met Isaura's, and he felt her hand on his arm. Before quitting the room she paused and looked back—Graham's look followed her own, and saw behind them the lady with the scarlet jacket escorted by some portly and decorated connoisseur. Isaura's face brightened to another kind of brightness—a pleased and tender light.

"Poor dear *Madre*," she murmured to herself in Italian.

"*Madre*," echoed Graham, also in Italian. "I have been misinformed, then: that lady is your mother."

Isaura laughed a pretty low silvery laugh, and replied in English, "She is not my mother, but I call her *Madre*, for I know no name more loving."

Graham was touched, and said gently, "Your own mother was evidently very dear to you."

Isaura's lip quivered, and she made a slight movement as if she would have withdrawn her hand from his arm. He saw that he had offended or wounded her, and with the straightforward frankness natural to him resumed quickly—

"My remark was impertinent in a stranger; forgive it."

"There is nothing to forgive, Monsieur."

The two now threaded their way through the crowd, both silent. At last Isaura, thinking she ought to speak first in order to show that Graham had not offended her, said—

"How lovely Mrs. Morley is!"

"Yes, and I like the spirit and ease of her American manner: have you known her long, Mademoiselle?"

"No; we met her for the first time some weeks ago at M. Savarin's."

"Was she very eloquent on the rights of women?"

"What! you have heard her on that subject?"

"I have rarely heard her on any other, though she is the best and perhaps the cleverest friend I have at Paris; but that may be my fault, for I like to start it. It is a relief to the languid small-talk of society to listen to any one thoroughly in earnest upon turning the world topsy-turvy."

"Do you suppose poor Mrs. Morley would seek to do that if she had her rights?" asked Isaura, with her musical laugh.

"Not a doubt of it; but perhaps you share her opinions."

"I scarcely know what her opinions are, but——"

"Yes—but?——"

"There is a—what shall I call it?—a per-

* *Bee*, a common expression in "the West," for a meeting or gathering of people.

suasion—a sentiment—out of which the opinions probably spring that I do share."

"Indeed? a persuasion, a sentiment, for instance, that a woman should have votes in the choice of legislators, and, I presume, in the task of legislation?"

"No, that is not what I mean. Still, that is an opinion, right or wrong, which grows out of the sentiment I speak of."

"Pray explain the sentiment."

"It is always so difficult to define a sentiment, but does it not strike you that in proportion as the tendency of modern civilization has been to raise women more and more to an intellectual equality with men—in proportion as they read and study and think—an uneasy sentiment, perhaps querulous, perhaps unreasonable grows up within their minds that the conventions of the world are against the complete development of the faculties thus aroused and the ambition thus animated;—that they cannot but rebel, though it may be silently, against the notions of the former age, when women were not thus educated; notions that the aim of the sex should be to steal through life unremarked; that it is a reproach to be talked of; that women are plants to be kept in a hothouse and forbidden the frank liberty of growth in the natural air and sunshine of heaven. This, at least, is a sentiment which has sprung up within myself, and I imagine that it is the sentiment which has given birth to many of the opinions or doctrines that seem absurd, and very likely are so, to the general public, I don't pretend even to have considered those doctrines. I don't pretend to say what may be the remedies for the restlessness and uneasiness I feel. I doubt if on this earth there be any remedies; all I know is, that I feel restless and uneasy."

Graham gazed on her countenance as she spoke, with an astonishment not unmingled with tenderness and compassion — astonishment at the contrast between a vein of reflection so hardy, expressed in a style of language that seemed to him so masculine, and the soft velvet dreamy eyes, the gentle tones, and delicate purity of hues rendered younger still by the blush that deepened their bloom.

At this moment they had entered the refreshment room; but a dense group being round the table, and both perhaps forgetting the object for which Mrs. Morley had introduced them to each other, they had mechanically seated themselves on an ottoman in a recess while Isaura was yet speaking. It must seem as strange to the reader as it did to Graham that such a speech should have been spoken by so young a girl to an acquaintance so new. But in truth Isaura was very little conscious of Graham's presence. She had got on a subject that perplexed and tormented her solitary thoughts—she was but thinking aloud.

"I believe," said Graham, after a pause, "that I comprehend your sentiment much better than I do Mrs. Morley's opinions; but permit me one observation. You say, truly, that the course of modern civilization has more or less affected the relative position of woman cultivated beyond that level on which she was formerly contented to stand—the nearer perhaps to the heart of man because not lifting her head to his height;—and hence a sense of restlessness, uneasiness. But do you suppose that, in this whirl and dance of the atoms which compose the rolling ball of the civilized world, it is only women that are made restless and uneasy? Do you not see amid the masses congregated in the wealthiest cities of the world, writhings and struggles against the received order of things? In this sentiment of discontent there is a certain truthfulness, because it is an element of human nature; and how best to deal with it is a problem yet unsolved. But in the opinions and doctrines to which, among the masses, the sentiment gives birth, the wisdom of the wisest detects only the certainty of a common ruin, offering for reconstruction the same building materials as the former edifice—materials not likely to be improved because they may be defaced. Ascend from the working classes to all others in which civilized culture prevails, and you will find that same restless feeling—the fluttering of untried wings against the bars between wider space and their longings. Could you poll all the educated ambitious young men in England—perhaps in Europe—at least half of them, divided between a reverence for the past and a curiosity as to the future, would sigh, "I am born a century too late or a century too soon!"

Isaura listen to this answer with a profound and absorbing interest. It was the first time that a clever young man talked thus sympathetically to her, a clever young girl.

Then rising, he said, "I see your *Madre* and our American friends are darting angry looks at me. They have made room for us at the table, and are wondering why I should keep you thus from the good things of this little life. One word more ere we join them—Consult your own mind, and consider whether your uneasiness and unrest are caused solely by conventional shackles on your sex. Are they not equally common to the youth of ours?—common to all who seek in art, in letters, nay, in the stormier field of active life, to clasp as a reality some image yet seen but as a dream?"

CHAPTER VIII.

No further conversation in the way of sustained dialogue took place that evening between Graham and Isaura.

The Americans and the Savarins clustered round Isaura when they quitted the refreshment-room. The party was breaking up. Vane would have offered his arm again to Isaura, but M. Savarin had forestalled him. The American was despatched by his wife to see for the carriage; and Mrs. Morley said, with her wonted sprightly tone of command—

"Now, Mr. Vane, you have no option but to take care of me to the shawl-room."

Madame Savarin and Signora Venosta had each found their cavaliers, the Italian still retaining hold of the portly connoiseur, and the Frenchwoman accepting the safeguard of the Vicomte de Brézé. As they descended the stairs, Mrs. Morley asked Graham what he thought of the young lady to whom she had presented him.

"I think she is charming," answered Graham.

"Of course; that is the stereotyped answer to all such questions, especially by you Englishmen. In public or in private, England is the mouthpiece of platitudes."

"It is natural for an American to think so. Every child that has just learned to speak uses bolder expressions than its grandmmama; but I am rather at a loss to know by what novelty of phrase an American would have answered your question."

"An American would have discovered that Isaura Cicogna had a soul, and his answer would have confessed it."

"It strikes me that he would then have uttered a platitude more stolid than mine. Every Christian knows that the dullest human being has a soul. But, to speak frankly, I grant that my answer did not do justice to the Signorina, nor to the impression she makes on me; and putting aside the charm of the face, there is a charm in a mind that seems to have gathered stores of reflection which I should scarcely have expected to find in a young lady brought up to be a professional singer."

"You add prejudice to platitude, and are horribly prosaic to-night; but here we are in the shawl-room. I must take another opportunity of attacking you. Pray dine with us to-morrow; you will meet our minister and a few other pleasant friends."

"I suppose I must not say, 'I shall be charmed,'" answered Vane, "but I shall be."

"*Bon Dieu!* that horrid fat man has deserted Signora Venosta—looking for his own cloak, I dare say. Selfish monster!—go and hand her to her carriage—quick, it is announced!"

Graham, thus ordered, hastened to offer his arm to the she-mountebank. Somehow she had acquired dignity in his eyes, and he did not feel the least ashamed of being in contact with the scarlet jacket.

The Signora grappled to him with a confiding familiarity.

"I am afraid," she said in Italian, as they passed along the spacious hall to the *porte cochère*—"I am afraid that I did not make a good effect to-night—I was nervous; did not you perceive it?"

"No, indeed; you enchanted us all," replied the dissimulator.

"How amiable you are to say so!—you must think that I sought for a compliment. So I did—you gave me more than I deserved. Wine is the milk of old men, and praise of old women. But an old man may be killed by too much wine, and an old woman lives all the longer for too much praise—*buona notte.*"

Here she sprang, lithesomely enough, into the carriage, and Isaura followed, escorted by M. Savarin. As the two men returned towards the shawl-room, the Frenchman said, "Madame Savarin and I complain that you have not let us see so much of you as we ought.

No doubt you are greatly sought after; but are you free to take your soup with us the day after to-morrow? You will meet the Count von Rudesheim and a few others more lively if less wise."

"The day after to-morrow I will mark with a white stone. To dine with M. Savarin is an event to a man who covets distinction."

"Such compliments reconcile an author to his trade. You deserve the best return I can make you. You will meet *la belle Isaura*. I have just engaged her and her *chaperon*. She is a girl of true genius, and genius is like those objects of virtue which belong to a former age, and become every day more scarce and more precious."

Here they encountered Colonel Morley and his wife hurrying to their carriage. The American stopped Vane, and whispered, "I am glad, sir, to hear from my wife that you dine with us to-morrow. Sir, you will meet Mademoiselle Cicogna, and I am not without a kinkle * that you will be enthused."

"This seems like a fatality," soliloquized Vane as he walked through the deserted streets towards his lodging. "I strove to banish that haunting face from my mind. I had half forgotten it, and now——" Here his murmur sank into silence. He was deliberating in very conflicted thought whether or not he should write to refuse the two invitations he had accepted.

"Pooh!" he said at last, as he reached the door of his lodging, "is my reason so weak that it should be influenced by a mere superstition? Surely I know myself too well, and have tried myself too long, to fear that I should be untrue to the duty and ends of my life, even if I found my heart in danger of suffering."

Certainly the Fates do seem to mock our resolves to keep our feet from their ambush, and our hearts from their snare.

How our lives may be colored by that which seems to us the most trivial accident, the merest chance! Suppose that Alain de Rochebriant had been invited to that *réunion* at M. Louvier's, and Graham Vane had accepted some other invitation and passed his evening elsewhere, Alain would probably have been presented to Isaura—what then might have happened? The impression Isaura had already made upon the young Frenchman was not so deep as that made upon Graham; but then, Alain's resolution to efface it was but commenced that day, and by no means yet confirmed. And if *he* had been the first clever young man to talk earnestly to that clever young girl, who can guess what impression he might have made upon her? His conversation might have had less philosophy and strong sense than Graham's, but more of poetic sentiment and fascinating romance.

However, the history of events that do not come to pass is not in the chronicle of the Fates.

* A notion.

BOOK THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

THE next day the guests at the Morley's had assembled when Vane entered. His apology for unpunctuality was cut short by the lively hostess: "Your pardon is granted without the humiliation of asking for it; we know that the characteristic of the English is always to be a little behindhand."

She then proceeded to introduce him to the American Minister, to a distinguished American poet, with a countenance striking for mingled sweetness and power, and one or two other of her countrymen sojourning at Paris; and this ceremony over, dinner was announced, and she bade Graham offer his arm to Mademoiselle Cicogna.

"Have you ever visited the United States, Mademoiselle?" asked Vane, as they seated themselves at the table.

"No."

"It is a voyage you are sure to make soon."

"Why so?"

"Because report says you will create a great sensation at the very commencement of your career; and the New World is ever eager to welcome each celebrity that is achieved in the Old; more especially that which belongs to your enchanting art."

"True, sir," said an American senator, solemnly striking into the conversation; "we are an appreciative people; and if that lady be as fine a singer as I am told, she might command any amount of dollars."

Isaura colored, and turning to Graham, asked him in a low voice if he were fond of music.

"I ought of course to say 'yes,'" answered Graham, in the same tone; "but I doubt if that 'yes' would be an honest one. In some moods, music—if a kind of music I like—affects me very deeply; in other moods, not at all. And I cannot bear much at a time. A concert wearies me shamefully; even an opera always seems to me a great deal too long. But I ought to add that I am no judge of music; that music was never admitted into my education; and, between ourselves, I doubt if there be one Englishman in five hundred who would care for opera or concert if it were not the fashion to say he did. Does my frankness revolt you?"

"On the contrary—I sometimes doubt, especially of late, if I am fond of music myself."

"Signorina—pardon me—it is impossible that you should not be. Genius can never be untrue to itself, and must love that in which it excels—that by which it communicates joy, and," he added, with a half-suppressed sigh, "attain to glory."

"Genius is a divine word, and not to be applied to a singer," said Isaura, with a humility in which there was an earnest sadness.

Graham was touched and startled; but before he could answer, the American Minister appealed to him across the table, asking if he had quoted accurately a passage in a speech by Graham's distinguished father, in regard to the share which England ought to take in the political affairs of Europe.

The conversation now became general; very political and very serious. Graham was drawn into it, and grew animated and eloquent.

Isaura listened to him with admiration. She was struck by what seemed to her a nobleness of sentiment which elevated his theme above the level of commonplace polemics. She was pleased to notice, in the attentive silence of his intelligent listeners, that they shared the effect produced on herself. In fact, Graham Vane was a born orator, and his studies had been

those of a political thinker. In common talk he was but the accomplished man of the world, easy and frank and genial, with a touch of good-natured sarcasm. But when the subject started drew him upward to those heights in which politics become the science of humanity, he seemed a changed being. His cheek glowed, his eye brightened, his voice mellowed into richer tones his language became unconsciously adorned. In such moments there might scarcely be an audience, even differing from him in opinion, which would not have acknowledged his spell.

When the party adjourned to the *salon*, Isaura said softly to Graham, "I understand why you did not cultivate music; and I think, too, that I can now understand what effects the human voice can produce on human minds, without recurring to the art of song."

"Ah," said Graham, with a pleased smile, "do not make me ashamed of my former rudeness by the revenge of compliment, and, above all, do not disparage your own art by supposing that any prose effect of voice in its utterance of mind can interpret that which music alone can express, even to listeners so uncultured as myself. Am I not told truly by musical composers, when I ask them to explain in words what they say in their music, that such explanation is impossible, that music has a language of its own, untranslatable by words?"

"Yes," said Isaura, with thoughtful brow but brightening eyes, "you are told truly. It was only the other day that I was pondering over that truth."

"But what recesses of mind, of heart, of soul, this untranslatable language penetrates and brightens up! How incomplete the grand nature of man—though man the grandest—would be, if you struck out of his reason the comprehension of poetry, music and religion! In each are reached and are sounded deeps in his reason otherwise concealed from himself. History, knowledge, science, stop at the point in which mystery begins. There they meet with the world of shadow. Not an inch of that world can they penetrate without the aid of poetry and religion, two necessities of intellectual man much more nearly allied than the votaries of the practical and the positive suppose. To the aid and elevation of both those necessities comes in music, and there has never existed a religion in the world which has not demanded music as its ally. If, as I said frankly, it is only in certain moods of my mind that I enjoy music, it is only because in certain moods of my mind I am capable of quitting the guidance of prosaic reason for the world of shadow; that I am so susceptible as at every hour, were my nature perfect, I should be to the mysterious influences of poetry and religion. Do you understand what I wish to express?"

"Yes, I do, and clearly."

"Then, Signorina, you are forbidden to undervalue the gift of song. You must feel its power over the heart, when you enter the opera-house; over the soul, when you kneel in a cathedral."

"Oh," cried Isaura, with enthusiasm, a rich glow mantling over her lovely face, how I thank you! Is it you who say you do not love music? How much better you understand it than I did till this moment!"

Here Mrs. Morley, joined by the American poet, came to the corner in which the Englishman and the singer had niched themselves. The poet began to talk, the other guests gathered round, and every one listened reverentially till the party broke up. Colonel Morley handed Isaura to her carriage—the she-mountebank again fell to the lot of Graham.

"Signor," said she, as he respectfully placed her shawl round her scarlet-and-gilt jacket, "are we so far from Paris that you cannot spare the time to call? My child does not sing in public, but at home you can hear her. It is not every woman's voice that is sweetest at home."

Graham bowed, and said he would call on the morrow.

Isaura mused in silent delight over the words which had so extolled the art of the singer. Alas, poor child! she could not guess that in those words, reconciling her to the profession of the stage, the speaker was pleading against his own heart.

There was in Graham's nature, as I think it commonly is in that of most true orators, a wonderful degree of *intellectual conscience* which impelled him to acknowledge the benignant influence of song, and to set before the young singer the noblest incentives to the profession to which he deemed her assuredly

destined. But in so doing he must have felt that he was widening the gulf between her life and his own; perhaps he wished to widen it in proportion as he dreaded to listen to any voice in his heart which asked if the gulf might not be overleapt.

CHAPTER II.

On the morrow Graham called at the villa at A——. The two ladies received him in Isaura's chosen sitting-room.

Somehow or other, conversation at first languished. Graham was reserved and distant, Isaura shy and embarrassed.

The Venosta had the *frais* of making talk to herself. Probably at another time Graham would have been amused and interested in the observation of a character new to him, and thoroughly southern—lovable, not more from its *naïve* simplicity of kindliness than from various little foibles and vanities, all of which were harmless, and some of them endearing as those of a child whom it is easy to make happy, and whom it seems so cruel to pain: and with all the Venosta's deviations from the polished and tranquil good taste of the *beau monde*, she had that indescribable grace which rarely deserts a Florentine, so that you might call her odd but not vulgar; while, though uneducated, except in the way of her old profession, and never having troubled herself to read anything but a *libretto*, and the pious books commended to her by her confessor, the artless babble of her talk every now and then flashed out with a quaint humor, lighting up terse fragments of the old Italian wisdom which had mysteriously embedded themselves in the groundwork of her mind.

But Graham was not at this time disposed to judge the poor Venosta kindly or fairly. Isaura had taken high rank in his thoughts. He felt an impatient resentment mingled with anxiety and compassionate tenderness at a companionship which seemed to him derogatory to the position he would have assigned to a creature so gifted, and unsafe as a guide amidst the perils and trials to which the youth, the beauty, and the destined profession of Isaura were exposed. Like most Englishmen —especially Englishmen wise in the knowledge of life—he held in fastidious regard the proprieties and conventions by which the dignity of woman is fenced round; and of those proprieties and conventions the Venosta naturally appeared to him a very unsatisfactory guardian and representative.

Happily unconscious of these hostile prepossessions, the elder Signora chatted on very gaily to the visitor. She was in excellent spirits; people had been very civil to her both at Colonel Morley's and M. Louvier's. The American minister had praised the scarlet jacket. She was convinced she had made a sensation two nights running. When the *amour propre* is pleased, the tongue is freed.

The Venosta ran on in praise of Paris and the Parisians, of Louvier and his *soirée* and the pistachio ice; of the Americans and a certain *crême de maraschino* which she hoped the Signor Inglese had not failed to taste—the *crême de maraschino* led her thoughts back to Italy. Then she grew mournful—how she missed the native *beau ciel!* Paris was pleasant, but how absurd to call it "*le Paradis des Femmes*"—as if *les Femmes* could find Paradise in a *brouillard!*

"But," she exclaimed, with vivacity of voice and gesticulation, "the Signor does not come to hear the parrot talk. He is engaged to come that he may hear the nightingale sing. A drop of honey attracts the fly more than a bottle of vinegar."

Graham could not help smiling at this adage. "I submit," said he, "to your comparison, as regards myself; but certainly anything less like a bottle of vinegar than your amiable conversation I cannot well conceive. However, the metaphor apart, I scarcely know how I dare ask Mademoiselle to sing after the confession I made to her last night."

"What confession?" asked the Venosta.

"That I know nothing of music, and doubt if I can honestly say that I am fond of it."

"Not fond of music! Impossible! You slander yourself. He who loves not music would have a dull time of it in heaven. But you are English, and perhaps have only heard the music of your own country. Bad, very bad—a heretic's music! Now listen."

Seating herself at the piano, she began an air from the "*Lucia*," crying out to Isaura to come and sing to her accompaniment."

"Do you really wish it?" asked Isaura of

Graham, fixing on him questioning timid eyes.

"I cannot say how much I wish to hear you."

Isaura moved to the instrument, and Graham stood behind her. Perhaps he felt that he should judge more impartially of her voice if not subjected to the charm of her face.

But the first note of the voice held him spell-bound: in itself, the organ was of the rarest order, mellow and rich, but so soft that its power was lost in its sweetness, and so exquisitely fresh in every note.

But the singer's charm was less in voice than in feeling—she conveyed to the listener so much more than was said by the words, or even implied by the music. Her song in this caught the art of the painter who impresses the mind with the consciousness of a something which the eye cannot detect on the canvas.

She seemed to breathe out from the depths of her heart the intense pathos of the original romance, so far exceeding that of the opera—the human tenderness, the mysic terror of a tragic love-tale more solemn in its sweetness than that of Verona.

When her voice died away no applause came—not even a murmur. Isaura bashfully turned round to steal a glance at her silent listener, and beheld moistened eyes and quivering lips. At that moment she was reconciled to her art. Graham rose abruptly and walked to the window.

"Do you doubt now if you are fond of music?" cried the Venosta.

"This is more than music," answered Graham, still with averted face. Then, after a short pause, he approached Isaura, and said, with a melancholy half-smile—

"I do not think, Mademoiselle, that I could dare to hear you often, it would take me too far from the hard real world; and he who would not be left behindhand on the road that he must journey cannot indulge frequent excursions into fairyland."

"Yet," said Isaura, in a tone yet sadder, "I was told in my childhood, by one whose genius gives authority to her words, that beside the real world lies the ideal. The real world then seemed rough to me. 'Escape,' said my counsellor, 'is granted from that stony thoroughfare into the fields beyond its formal hedgerows. The ideal world has its sorrows, but it never admits despair.' That counsel, then, methought, decided my choice of life. I know not now if it has done so."

"Fate," answered Graham, slowly and thoughtfully—"Fate, which is not the ruler but the servant of Providence, decides our choice of life, and rarely from outward circumstances. Usually the motive power is within. We apply the word genius to the minds of the gifted few; but in all of us there is a genius that is inborn, a pervading something which distinguishes our very identity, and dictates to the conscience that which we are best fitted to do and to be. In so dictating it compels our choice of life; or if we resist the dictate, we find at the close that we have gone astray. My choice of life thus compelled is on the stony thoroughfares — yours in the green fields."

As he thus said, his face became clouded and mournful.

The Venosta, quickly tired of a conversation in which she had no part, and having various little household matters to attend to, had during this dialogue slipped unobserved from the room; yet neither Isaura nor Graham felt the sudden consciousness that they were alone which belongs to lovers.

"Why," asked Isaura, with that magic smile reflected in countless dimples which, even when her words were those of a man's reasoning, made them seem gentle with a woman's sentiment—"why must your road through the world be so exclusively the stony one? It is not from necessity—it cannot be from taste. And whatever definition you give to genius, surely it is not your own inborn genius that dictates to you a constant exclusive adherence to the commonplace of life."

"Ah, Mademoiselle! do not misrepresent me. I did not say that I could not sometimes quit the real world for fairyland—I said that I could not do so often. My vocation is not that of a poet or artist."

"It is that of an orator, I know," said Isaura, kindling;—"so they tell me, and I believe them. But is not the orator somewhat akin to the poet? is not oratory an art?"

"Let us dismiss the word orator: as applied to English public life, it is a very deceptive expression. The Englishman who wishes to influence his countrymen by force of words

spoken must mix with them in their beaten thoroughfares—must make himself master of their practical views and intetests—must be conversant with their prosaic occupations and business—must understand how to adjust their loftiest aspirations to their material welfare—must avoid, as the fault most dangerous to himself and to others, that kind of eloquence which is called oratory in France, and which has helped to make the French the worst politicians in Europe. Alas, Mademoiselle! I fear that an English statesman would appear to you a very dull orator."

"I see that I spoke foolishly—yes, you show me that the world of the statesman lies apart from that of the artist. Yet——"

"Yet what?"

"May not the ambition of both be the same?"

"How so?"

"To refine the rude, to exalt the mean—to identify their own fame with some new beauty, some new glory, added to the treasure-house of all."

Graham bowed his head reverently, and then raised it with the flush of enthusiasm on his cheeck and brow.

"Oh, Mademoiselle!" he exclaimed, "what a sure guide and what a nobler inspirer to a true Englishman's ambition nature has fitted you to be were it not——" He paused abruptly.

This outburst took Isaura utterly by surprise. She had been accustomed the language of compliment till it had begun to pall, but a compliment of this kind was the first that had ever reached her ear. She had no words in answer to it; involuntarily she placed her hand on her heart as if to still its beatings. But the unfinished exclamation, "Were it not," troubled her more than the preceding words had flattered—and mechanically she murmured, "Were it not—what?"

"Oh," answered Graham, affecting a tone of gaiety, "I felt too ashamed of my selfishness as man to finish my sentence."

"Do so, or I shall fancy you refrained lest you might wound me as a woman."

"No so—on the contrary; had I gone on, it would have been to say that a woman of your genius, and more especially of such mastery in the most popular and fascinating of all arts, could not be contented if she inspired nobler thoughts in a single breast—she must belong to the public, or rather the public must belong to her: it is but a corner of her heart that an individual can occupy, and even that individual must merge his existence in hers—must be contended to reflect a ray of the light she sheds on admiring thousands. Who could dare to say to you, 'Renounce your career—confine your genius, your art, to the petty circle of home?' To an actress—a singer—with whose fame the world rings, home would be a prison. Pardon me, pardon——"

Isaura had turned away her face to hide tears that would force their way, but she held out her hand to him with a child-like frankness, and said softly, "I am not offended." Graham did not trust himself to continue the same strain of conversation. Breaking into a new subject, he said, after a constrained pause, "Will you think it very impertinent in so new an acquaintance, if I ask how it is that you, an Italian, know our language as a native? and is it by Italian teachers that you have been trained to think and to feel?"

"Mr. Selby, my second father, was an Englishman, and did not speak any other language with comfort to himself. He was very fond of me—and had he been really my father I could not have loved him more: we were constant companions till—till I lost him."

"And no mother left to console you." Isaura shook her head mournfully, and the Venosta here re-entered.

Graham felt conscious that he had already stayed too long, and took leave.

They knew that they were to meet that evening at the Savarins.

To Graham that thought was not one of unmixed pleasure; the more he knew of Isaura, the more he felt self-reproach that he had allowed himself to know her at all.

But after he had left, Isaura sang low to herself the song which had so affected her listener; then she fell into abstracted reverie, but she felt a strange and new sort of happiness. In dressing for M. Savarin's dinner, and twining the classic ivy wreath into her dark locks, her Italian servant exclaimed, "How beautiful the Signorina looks to-night!"

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CHAPTER III.

M. SAVARIN was one of the most brilliant of that galaxy of literary men which shed lustre on the reign of Louis Philippe.

His was an intellect peculiarly French in its lightness and grace. Neither England nor Germany nor America has produced any resemblance to it. Ireland has, in Thomas Moore; but then in Irish genius there is so much that is French.

M. Savarin was free from the ostentatious extravagance which had come into vogue with the Empire. His house and establishment were modestly maintained within the limit of an income chiefly, perhaps entirely, derived from literary profits.

Though he gave frequent dinners, it was but to few at a time, and without show or pretence. Yet the dinners, though simple, were perfect of their kind; and the host so contrived to infuse his own playful gaiety into the temper of his guests, that the feasts at his house were considered the pleasantest at Paris. On this occasion the party extended to ten, the largest number his table admitted.

All the French guests belonged to the Liberal party, though in changing tints of the tricolor. *Place aux dames*, first to be named were the Countess de Craon and Madame Vertot—both without husbands. The Countess had buried the Count, Madame Vertot had separated from Monsieur. The Countess was very handsome, but she was sixty. Madame Vertot was twenty years younger, but she was very plain. She had quarrelled with the distinguished author for whose sake she had separated from Monsieur, and no man had since presumed to think that he could console a lady so plain for the loss of an author so distinguished.

Both these ladies were very clever. The Countess had written lyrical poems entitled "Cries of Liberty," and a drama of which Danton was the hero, and the moral too revolutionary for admission to the stage; but at heart the Countess was not at all a revolutionist—the last person in the world to do or desire anything that could bring a washerwoman an inch nearer to a countess. She was one of those persons who play with fire in order to appear enlightened.

Madame Vertot was of severer mould. She had knelt at the feet of M. Thiers, and went into the historico-political line. She had written a remarkable book upon the modern Carthage (meaning England), and more recently a work that had excited much attention upon the Balance of Power, in which she proved it to be the interest of civilization and the necessity of Europe that Belgium should be added to France, and Prussia circumscribed to the bounds of its original margraviate. She showed how easily these two objects could have been affected by a constitutional monarch instead of an egotistical Emperor. Madame Vertot was a decided Orleanist.

Both these ladies condescended to put aside authorship in general society. Next amongst our guests let me place the Count de Passy and *Madame son épouse:* the Count was seventy-one, and, it is needless to add, a type of Frenchman rapidly vanishing, and not likely to find itself renewed. How shall I describe him so as to make my English reader understand? Let me try by analogy. Suppose a man of great birth and fortune, who in his youth had been an enthusiastic friend of Lord Byron and a jocund companion of George IV. —who had in him an immense degree of lofty romantic sentiment with an equal degree of well-bred worldly cynicism, but who, on account of that admixture, which is rare, kept a high rank in either of the two societies into which, speaking broadly, civilized life divides itself—the romantic and the cynical. The Count de Passy had been the most ardent among the young disciples of Châteaubriand—the most brilliant among the young courtiers of Charles X. Need I add that he had been a terrible lady-killer?

But in spite of his admiration of Châteaubriand and his allegiance to Charles X., the Count had been always true to those caprices of the French *noblesse* from which he descended —caprices which destroyed them in the old Revolution—caprices belonging to the splendid ignorance of their nation in general and their order in particular. Speaking without regard to partial exceptions, the French *gentilhomme* is essentially a Parisian; a Parisian is essentially impressionable to the impulse of fashion of the moment. Is it *à la mode* for the moment to be Liberal or anti-Liberal? Parisians embrace and kiss each other, and swear through life and death to adhere for ever to the

mode of the moment. The Three Days were the *mode* of the moment—the Count de Passy became an enthusiastic Orleanist. Louis Philippe was very gracious to him. He was decorated—he was named *préfet* of his department—he was created senator—he was about to be sent Minister to a German Court when Louis Philippe fell. The Republic was proclaimed. The Count caught the popular contagion, and after exchanging tears and kisses with patriots whom a week before he had called *canaille*, he swore eternal fidelity to the Republic. The fashion of the moment suddenly became Napoleonic, and with the *coup d'état* the Republic was metamorphosed into an Empire. The Count wept on the bosoms of all the *Vieilles Moustaches* he could find, and rejoiced that the sun of Austerlitz had re-arisen. But after the affair of Mexico the sun of Austerlitz waxed very sickly. Imperialism was fast going out of fashion. The Count transferred his affection to Jules Favre, and joined the ranks of the advanced Liberals. During all these political changes, the Count had remained very much the same man in private life; agreeable, good-natured, witty, and, above all, a devotee of the fair sex. When he had reached the age of sixty-eight he was still *fort bel homme*—unmarried, with a grand presence and charming manner. At that age he said, "*Je me range*," and married a young lady of eighteen. She adored her husband, and was wildly jealous of him; while the Count did not seem at all jealous of her, and submitted to her adoration with a gentle shrug of the shoulders.

The three other guests who, with Graham and the two Italian ladies, made up the complement of ten, were the German Count von Rudesheim, a celebrated French physician named Bacourt, and a young author whom Savarin had admitted into his clique and declared to be of rare promise. This author, whose real name was Gustave Rameau, but who, to prove, I suppose, the sincerity of that scorn for ancestry which he professed, published his verses under the patrician designation of Alphonse de Valcour, was about twenty-four, and might have passed at the first glance for younger; but, looking at him closely, the signs of old age were already stamped on his visage.

He was undersized and of a feeble slender frame. In the eyes of women and artists the defects of his frame were redeemed by the extraordinary beauty of the face. His black hair, carefully parted in the centre, and worn long and flowing, contrasted the whiteness of a high though narrow forehead, and the delicate palor of his cheeks. His features were very regular, his eyes singularly bright; but the expression of the face spoke of fatigue and exhaustion—the silky locks were already thin, and interspersed with threads of silver—the bright eyes shone out from sunken orbits—the lines round the mouth were marked as they are in the middle age of one who has lived too fast.

It was a countenance that might have excited a compassionate and tender interest, but for something arrogant and supercilious in the expression — something that demanded not tender pity but enthusiastic admiration. Yet that expression was displeasing rather to men than to women; and one could well conceive that, among the latter, the enthusiastic admiration it challenged would be largely conceded.

The conversation at dinner was in complete contrast to that at the American's the day before. There the talk, though animated, had been chiefly earnest and serious—here it was all touch and go, sally and repartee. The subjects were the light *on dits* and lively anecdotes of the day, not free from literature and politics, but both treated as matters of *persiflage* hovered round with a jest and quitted with an epigram. The two French lady Authors, the Count de Passy, the physician, and the host, far outshone all the other guests. Now and then, however, the German Count struck in with an ironical remark condensing a great deal of grave wisdom, and the young author with ruder and more biting sarcasm. If the sarcasm told, he showed his triumph by a low-pitched laugh; if it failed, he evinced his displeasure by a contemptuous sneer or a grim scowl.

Isaura and Graham were not seated near each other, and were for the most part contented to be listeners.

On adjourning to the *salon* after dinner, Graham, however, was approaching the chair in which Isaura had placed herself, when the young author, forestalling him, dropped into the seat next to her, and began a conversation in a voice so low that it might have passed for a

whisper. The Englishman drew back and observed them. He soon perceived, with a pang of jealousy not unmingled with scorn, that the author's talk appeared to interest Isaura. She listened with evident attention; and when she spoke in return, though Graham did not hear her words, he could observe on her expressive countenance an increased gentleness of aspect.

"I hope," said the physician, joining Graham, as most of the other guests gathered round Savarin, who was in liveliest vein of anecdote and wit—"I hope that the fair Italian will not allow that ink-bottle imp to persuade her that she has fallen in love with him."

"Do young ladies generally find him so seductive?" asked Graham with a forced smile.

"Probably enough. He has the reputation of being very clever and very wicked, and that is a sort of character which has the serpent's fascination for the daughters of Eve."

"Is the reputation merited?"

"As to the cleverness, I am not a fair judge. I dislike that sort of writing which is neither manlike nor womanlike, and in which young Rameau excels. He has the knack of finding very exaggerated phrases by which to express commonplace thoughts. He writes verses about love in words so stormy that you might fancy that Jove was descending upon Semele. But when you examine his words, as a sober pathologist like myself is disposed to do, your fear for the peace of households vanishes—they are '*Vox et præterea nihil*'—no man really in love would use them. He writes prose about the wrongs of humanity. You say, 'Grant the wrongs, now for the remedy,' and you find nothing but balderdash. Still I am bound to say that both in verse and prose Gustave Rameau is in unison with a corrupt taste of the day, and therefore he is coming into vogue. So much as to his writings; as to his wickedness, you have only to look at him to feel sure that he is not a hundredth part so wicked as he wishes to seem. In a word, then, Mons. Gustave Rameau is a type of that somewhat numerous class among the youth of Paris, which I call 'the lost Tribe of Absinthe.' There is a set of men who begin to live full gallop while they are still boys. As a general rule, they are originally of the sickly frames which can scarcely even trot, much less gallop, without the spur of stimulants, and no stimulant so fascinates their peculiar nervous system as absinthe. The number of patients in this set who at the age of thirty are more worn out than septuagenarians, increases so rapidly as to make one dread to think what will be the next race of Frenchmen. To the predilection for absinthe young Rameau and the writers of his set add the imitation of Heine, after, indeed, the manner of caricaturists, who effect a likeness striking in proportion as it is ugly. It is not easy to imitate the pathos and the wit of Heine; but it is easy to imitate his defiance of the Deity, his mockery of right and wrong, his rentless war on that hereoic standard of thought and action which the writers who exalt their nation intuitively preserve. Rameau cannot be a Heine, but he can be to Heine what a misshapen snarling dwarf is to a tangled blaspheming Titan. Yet he interests the women in general, and he evidently interests the fair Signorina in especial."

Just as Bacourt finished that last sentence, Isaura lifted the head which had hither bent in an earnest listening attitude that seemed to justify the Doctor's remarks, and looked round. Her eyes met Graham's with the fearless candor which made half the charm of their bright yet soft intelligence. But she dropped them suddenly with a half-start and a change of color, for the expression of Graham's face was unlike that which she had hitherto seen on it—it was hard, stern, somewhat disdainful. A minute or so afterwards she rose, and in passing across the rooms towards the group round the host, paused at a table covered with books and prints near to which Graham was standing—alone. The doctor had departed in company with the German Count.

Isaura took up one of the prints.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "Sorrento—my Sorrento. Have you ever visited Sorrento, Mr. Vane?"

Her question and her movement were evidently in conciliation. Was the conciliation prompted by coquetry, or by a sentiment more innocent and artless?

Graham doubted, and replied coldly, as he bent over the print—

"I once stayed there a few days, but my recollection of it is not sufficiently lively to enable me to recognize its features in this design."

"That is the house, at least so they say of Tasso's father; of coure you visited that?"

"Yes, it was a hotel in my time; I lodged there."

"And I too. There I first read 'the Gerusalemme.'" The last words were said in Italian, with a low measured tone, inwardly and dreamily.

A somewhat sharp and incisive voice speaking in French here struck in and prevented Graham's rejoinder: "*Quel joli dessin!* What is it, Mademoiselle?"

Graham recoiled: the speaker was Gustave Rameau, who had, unobserved, first watched Isaura, then rejoined her side.

"A view of Sorrento, Monsieur, but it does not do justice to the place. I was pointing out the house which belonged to Tasso's father."

"Tasso! *Hein!* and which is the fair Eleonora's?"

"Monsieur," answered Isaura, rather startled at that question from a professed *homme de lettres*, "Eleonora did not live at Sorrento."

"*Tant pis pour Sorrente*," said the *homme de lettres*, carelessly. "No one would care for Tasso if it were not for Eleonora."

"I should rather have thought," said Graham, "that no one would have cared for Eleonora if it were not for Tasso."

Rameau glanced at the Englishman superciliously.

"*Pardon*, Monsieur—in every age a love-story keeps its interest; but who cares nowadays for *le clinquant du Tasse?*"

"*Le clinquant du Tasse!*" exclaimed Isaura, indignantly.

"The expression is Bôileau's, Mademoiselle, in ridicule of the '*Sot de qualité*, who prefers

'Le clinquant du Tasse à tout l'or de Virgile.'

But for my part I have as little faith in the last as the first."

"I do not know Latin, and have therefore not read Virgil," said Isaura.

"Possibly," remarked Graham, "Monsieur does not know Italian, and has therefore not read Tasso."

"If that be meant in sarcasm," retorted Rameau, "I construe it as a compliment. A Frenchman who is contented to study the masterpieces of modern literature need learn no language and read no authors but his own."

Isaura laughed her pleasant silvery laugh "I should admire the frankness of that boast, Monsieur, if in our talk just now you had not spoken as contemptuously of what we are accustomed to consider French masterpieces as you have done of Virgil and Tasso."

"Ah, Mademoiselle! it is not my fault if you have had teachers of taste so *rococo* as to bid you find masterpieces in the tiresome stilted tragedies of Corneille and Racine. Poetry of a court, not of a people—one simple novel, one simple stanza that probes the hidden recesses of the human heart, reveals the sores of this wretched social state, denounces the evils of superstition, kingcraft, and priestcraft, is worth a library of the rubbish which pedagogues call 'the classics.' We agree, at least, in one thing, Mademoiselle; we both do homage to the genius of your friend, Madame de Grantmesnil."

"Your friend, Signorina!" said Graham, incredulously; "is Madame de Grantmesnil your friend?"

"The dearest I have in the world."

Graham's face darkened; he turned away in silence, and in another minute vanished from the room, persuading himself that he felt not one pang of jealousy in leaving Gustav Rameau by the side of Isaura. "Her dearest friend Madame de Grantmesnil!"—he muttered.

A word now on Isaura's chief correspondent. Madame de Grantmesnil was a woman of of noble birth and ample fortune. She had separated from her husband in the second year after marriage. She was a singularly eloquent writer, surpassed among contemporaries of her sex in popularity and renown only by Georges Sand.

At least as fearless as that great novelist in the frank exposition of her views, she had commenced her career in letters by a work of astonishing power and pathos, directed against the institution of marriage as regulated in Roman Catholic communities. I do not know that it said more on this delicate subject than the English Milton has said; but then Milton did not write for a Roman Catholic community, nor adopt a style likely to captivate the working classes. Madame de Grantmesnil's first book was deemed an attack on the religion of the country, and captivated those among the working classes who had already abjured that religion. This work was followed up by others

more or less in defiance of "received opinions;" some with political, some with social revolutionary aim and tendency, but always with a singular purity of style. Search all her books, and however you might revolt from her doctrine, you could not find a hazardous expression. The novels of English young ladies are naughty in comparison. Of late years, whatever might be hard or audacious in her political or social doctrines, softened itself into charm amid the golden haze of romance. Her writings had grown more and more purely artistic—poetising what is good and beautiful in the realities of life, rather than creating a false ideal out of what is vicious and deformed. Such a woman, separated young from her husband, could not enunciate such opinions and lead a life so independent and uncontrolled as Madame de Grantmesnil had done, without scandal, without calumny. Nothing, however, in her actual life, had ever been so proved against her as to lower the high position she occupied in right of birth, fortune, renown. Wherever she went she was *fêtée*—as in England foreign princes, and in America foreign authors, are *fêtés*. Those who knew her well concurred in praise of her lofty, generous, lovable qualities. Madame de Grantmesnil had known Mr. Selby; and when, at his death, Isaura, in the innocent age between childhood and youth, had been left the most sorrowful and lonely creature on the face of the earth, this famous woman, worshipped by the rich for her intellect, adored by the poor for her beneficence, came to the orphan's friendless side, breathing love once more into her pining heart, and waking for the first time the desires of genius, the aspirations of art, in the dim self-consciousness of a soul between sleep and waking.

But, my dear Englishman, put yourself in Graham's place, and suppose that you were beginning to fall in love with a girl whom for many good reasons you ought not to marry; suppose that in the same hour in which you were angrily conscious of jealousy on account of a man whom it wounds your self-esteem to consider a rival, the girl tells you that her dearest friend is a woman who is famed for her hostility to the institution of marriage!

CHAPTER IV.

On the same day in which Graham dined with the Savarins, M. Louvier assembled round his table the *élite* of the young Parisians who constituted the oligarchy of fashion, to meet whom he had invited his new friend the Marquis de Rochebriant. Most of them belonged to the Legitimist party—the *noblesse* of the *faubourg;* those who did not, belonged to no political party at all—indifferent to the cares of mortal states as the gods of Epicurus. Foremost among this *Jeunesse dorée* were Alain's kinsmen, Raoul and Enguerrand de Vandemar. To these Louvier introduced him with a burly parental *bonhomie*, as if he were the head of the family. "I need not bid you, young folks, to make friends with each other. A Vandemar and a Rochebriant are not made friends—they are born friends." So saying he turned to his other guests.

Almost in an instant Alain felt his constraint melt away in the cordial warmth with which his cousins greeted him.

These young men had a striking family likeness to each other, and yet in feature, coloring, and expression, in all save that strange family likeness, they were contrasts.

Raoul was tall, and, though inclined to be slender, with sufficient breadth of shoulder to indicate no inconsiderable strength of frame. His hair worn short, and his silky beard worn long, were dark, so were his eyes, shaded by curved drooping lashes; his complexion was pale, but clear and healthful. In repose the expression of his face was that of a somewhat melancholy indolence, but in speaking it became singularly sweet, with a smile of the exquisite urbanity which no artificial politeness can bestow; it must emanate from that native high breeding which has its source in goodness of heart.

Enguerrand was fair, with curly locks of a golden chestnut. He wore no beard, only a small moustache rather darker than his hair. His complexion might in itself be called effeminate, its bloom was so fresh and delicate, but there was so much of boldness and energy in the play of his countenance, the hardy outline of the lips, and the open breadth of the forehead, that "effeminate" was an epithet no one ever assigned to his aspect. He was somewhat under the middle height, but beau-

tifully proportioned, carried himself well, and somehow or other did not look short even by the side of tall men. Altogether he seemed formed to be a mother's darling, and spoiled by women, yet to hold his own among men with a strength of will more evident in his look and his bearing than it was in those of his graver and statlier brother.

Both were considered by their young coequals models in dress, but in Raoul there was no sign that care or thought upon dress had been bestowed; the simplicity of his costume was absolute and severe. On his plain shirt-front there gleamed not a stud, on his fingers there sparkled not a ring. Enguerrand, on the contrary, was not without pretension in his attire; the *broderie* in his shirt-front seemed woven by the Queen of the Fairies. His rings of turquoise and opal, his studs and wrist-buttons of pearl and brilliants must have cost double the rental of Rochebriant, but probably they cost him nothing. He was one of those happy Lotharios to whom Calistas make constant presents. All about him was so bright that the atmosphere around seemed gayer for his presence.

In one respect at least the brothers closely resembled each other—in that exquisite graciousness of manner for which the genuine French noble is traditionally renowned—a graciousness that did not desert them even when they came reluctantly into contact with *roturiers* or republicans; but the graciousness became *égalité, fraternité* towards one of their caste and kindred.

"We must do our best to make Paris pleasant to you," said Raoul, still retaining in his grasp the hand he had taken.

"*Vilain cousin*," said the livelier Enguerrand, "to have been in Paris twenty-four hours, and without letting us know."

"Has not your father told you that I called upon him?"

"Our father," answered Raoul, "was not so savage as to conceal that fact, but he said you were only here on business for a day or two, had declined his invitation, and would not give your address. *Pauvre père!* we scolded him well for letting you escape from us thus. My mother has not forgiven him yet; we must present you to her to-morrow. I answer for your liking her almost as much as she will like you."

Before Alain could answer dinner was announced. Alain's place at dinner was between his cousins. How pleasant they made themselves! It was the first time in which Alain had been brought into such familiar conversation with countrymen of his own rank as well as his own age. His heart warmed to them. The general talk of the other guests was strange to his ear; it ran much upon horses and races, upon the opera and the ballet; it was enlivened with satirical anecdotes of persons whose names were unknown to the Provincial—not a word was said that showed the smallest interest in politics or the slightest acquaintance with litereture. The world of these well-born guests seemed one from which all that concerned the great mass of mankind was excluded, yet the talk was that which could only be found in a very polished society; in it there was not much wit, but there was a prevalent vein of gaiety, and the gaiety was never violent, the laughter was never loud; the scandals circulated might imply cynicism the most absolute, but in language the most refined. The jockey Club of Paris has its perfume.

Raoul did not mix in the general conversation; he devoted himself pointedly to the amusements of his cousin explaining to him the point of the anecdotes circulated, or hitting off in terse sentences the characters of the talkers.

Enguerrand was evidently of temper more vivacious than his brother, and contributed freely to the current play of light gossip and mirthful sally.

Louvier, seated between a duke and a Russian prinee, said little, except to recommend a wine or an *entrée*, but kept his eye constantly on the Vandemars and Alain.

Immediately after coffee the guests departed. Before they did so, however, Raoul introduced his cousin to those of the party most distinguished by hereditary rank or social position. With these the name of Rochebriant was too historically famous not to insure respect of its owner; they welcomed him among them as if he were their brother.

The French duke claimed him as a connection by an alliance in the fourteenth century; the Russian prince had known the late Marquis, and "trusted that the son would allow him to improve into friendship the acquaintance he had formed with the father."

Those ceremonials over, Raoul linked his arm

in Alain's, and said: "I am not going to release you so soon after we have caught you. You must come with me to a house in which I at least spend an hour or two every evening. I am at home there. Bah! I take no refusal. Do not suppose I carry you off to Bohemia, a country which, I am sorry to say, Enguerrand now and then visits, but which is to me as unknown as the mountains of the moon. The house I speak of is *comme il faut* to the utmost. Is that of the Contessa di Rimini—a charming Italian by marriage, but by birth and in character *on ne peut plus Française*. My mother adores her."

That dinner at M. Louvier's had already effected a great change in the mood and temper of Alain de Rochebriant; he felt, as if by magic, the sense of youth, of rank, of station, which had been so suddenly checked and stifled, warmed to life within his veins. He should have deemed himself a boor had he refused the invitation so frankly tendered.

But on reaching the *coupé* which the brothers kept in common, and seeing it only held two, he drew back.

"Nay, enter, *mon cher*," said Raoul, divining the cause of his hesitation; "Enguerrand has gone on to his club."

CHAPTER V.

"TELL me," said Raoul, when they were in the carriage, "how you came to know M. Louvier."

"He is my chief mortgagee."

"H'm! that explains it. But you might be in worse hands; the man has a character for liberality."

"Did your father mention to you my circumstances, and the reason that brings me to Paris?"

"Since you put the question point-blank, my dear cousin, he did."

"He told you how poor I am, and how keen must be my life-long struggle to keep Rochebriant as the home of my race."

"He told us all that could make us still more respect the Marquis de Rochebriant, and still more eagerly long to know our cousin and the head of our house," answered Raoul, with a certain nobleness of tone and manner.

Alain pressed his kinsman's hand with grateful emotion.

"Yet," he said falteringly, "your father agreed with me that my circumstances would not allow me to——"

"Bah!" interrupted Raoul with a gentle laugh; "my father is a very clever man, doubtless, but he knows only the world of his own day, nothing of the world of ours. I and Enguerrand will call on you to-morrow, to take you to my mother, and before doing so, to consult as to affairs in general. On this last matter Enguerrand is an oracle. Here we are at the Contessa's."

CHAPTER VI.

THE Contessa di Rimini received her visitors in a boudoir furnished with much apparent simplicity, but a simplicity by no means inexpensive. The draperies were but of chintz, and the walls covered with the same material, a lively pattern, in which the prevalents were rose-color and white; but the ornaments on the mantelpiece, the china stored in the cabinets or arranged on the shelves, the small nick-nacks scattered on the tables, were costly rarities of art.

The Contessa herself was a woman who had somewhat passed her thirtieth year, not strikingly handsome, but exquisitely pretty. "There is," said a great French writer, "only one way in which a woman can be handsome, but a hundred thousand ways in which she can be pretty;" and it would be impossible to reckon up the number of ways in which Adeline di Rimini carried of the prize in prettiness.

Yet it would be unjust to the personal attractions of the Contessa to class them all under the word "prettiness." When regarded more attentively, there was an expression in her countenance that might almost be called divine, it spoke so unmistakably of a sweet nature and an untroubled soul. An English poet once described her by repeating the old lines,—

> "Her face is like the milky way i' the sky—
> A meeting of gentle lights without a name."

She was not alone; an elderly lady sate on

an arm-chair by the fire, engaged in knitting; and a man, also elderly, and whose dress proclaimed him an ecclesiastic, sate at the opposite corner, with a large Angora cat on his lap.

"I present to you, Madame," said Raoul, "my new-found cousin, the seventeenth Marquis de Rochebriant, whom I am proud to consider, on the male side, the head of our house representing its eldest branch: welcome him for my sake—in future he will be welcome for his own."

The Contessa replied very graciously to this introduction, and made room for Alain on the divan from which she had risen.

The old lady looked up from her knitting; the ecclesiastic removed the cat from his lap. Said the old lady, "I announce myself to M. le Marquis; I knew his mother well enough to be invited to his christening; otherwise I have no pretension to the acquaintance of *si beau* a cavalier,—being old—rather deaf—very stupid—exceedingly poor——"

"And," interrupted Raoul, "the woman in all Paris, the most adored for *bonté*, and consulted for *savoir vivre* by the young cavaliers whom she deigns to receive. Alain, I present you to Madame de Maury, the widow of a distinguished author and academician, and the daughter of the brave Henri de Gerval, who fought for the good cause in La Vendée. I present you also to the Abbé Vertpré, who has passed his life in the vain endeavor to make other men as good as himself."

"Base flatterer!" said the Abbé, pinching Raoul's ear with one hand, while he extended the other to Alain. "Do not let your cousin frighten you from knowing me, M. le Marquis; when he was my pupil, he so convinced me of the incorrigibility of perverse human nature, that I now chiefly address myself to the moral improvement of the brute creation. Ask the Contessa if I have not achieved a *beau succès* with her Angora cat. Three months ago that creature had the two worst propensities of men. He was at once savage and mean; he bit, he stole. Does he ever bite now? No. Does he ever steal? No. Why? I have awakened in that cat the dormant conscience, and that done, the conscience regulates his actions: once made aware of the difference between wrong and right, the cat maintains it unswervingly, as if it were a law of nature. But if, with prodigious labor, one does awaken conscience in a human sinner, it has no steady effect on his conduct—he continues to sin all the same. Mankind at Paris, Monsieur le Marquis, is divided between two classes—one bites and the other steals: shun both; devote yourself to cats."

The Abbé delivered this oration with a gravity of mien and tone which made it difficult to guess whether he spoke in sport or in earnest—in simple playfulness or with latent sarcasm.

But on the brow and in the eye of the priest there was a general expression of quiet benevolence, which made Alain incline to the belief that he was only speaking as a pleasant humorist; and the Marquis replied gaily—

"Monsieur l'Abbé, admitting the superior virtue of cats, when taught by so intelligent a preceptor, still the business of human life is not transacted by cats; and since men must deal with men, permit me, as a preliminary caution, to inquire in which class I must rank yourself. Do you bite or do you steal?"

This sally, which showed that the Marquis was already shaking off his provincial reserve, met with great success.

Raoul and the Contessa laughed merrily; Madame de Maury clapped her hands, and cried, "*Bien!*"

The Abbé replied, with unmoved gravity, "Both. I am a priest; it is my duty to bite the bad and steal from the good, as you will see, M. le Marquis, if you will glance at this paper."

Here he handed to Alain a memorial on behalf of an afflicted family who had been burnt out of their home and reduced from comparative ease to absolute want. There was a list appended of some twenty subscribers, the last being the Contessa, fifty francs, and Madame de Maury, five.

"Allow me, Marquis" said the Abbé, "to steal from you; bless you twofold, *mon-fils!*" (taking the napoleon Alain extended to him)—"first for your charity—secondly, for the effect of its example upon the heart of your cousin. Raoul de Vandemar, stand and deliver. Bah!—what! only ten francs."

Raoul made a sign to the Abbé, unperceived by the rest, as he answered, "Abbé, I should excel your expectations of my career if I always continue worth half as much as my cousin."

Alain felt to the bottom of his heart the delicate tact of his richer kinsmen in giving less than himself and the Abbé replied, "Niggard, you are pardoned. Humility is a more difficult virtue to produce than charity, and in your case an instance of it is so rare that it merits encouragement."

The "tea equipage" was now served in what at Paris is called the English fashion; the Contessa presided over it, the guests gathered round the table, and the evening passed away in the innocent gaiety of a domestic circle. The talk, if not especially intellectual, was at least not fashionable—books were not discussed, neither were scandals; yet somehow or other it was cheery and animated, like that of a happy family in a country house. Alain thought still the better of Raoul that, Parisian though he was, he could appreciate the charm of an evening so innocently spent.

On taking leave, the Contessa gave Alain a general invitation to drop in whenever he was not better engaged.

"I except only the opera nights," said she. "My husband has gone to Milan on his affairs, and during his absence I do not go to parties; the opera I cannot resist."

Raoul set Alain down at his lodgings. "*Au revoir;* to-morrow at one o'clock expect Enguerrand and myself."

CHAPTER VII.

Raoul and Enguerrand called on Alain at the hour fixed.

"In the first place," said Raoul, "I must beg you to accept my mother's regrets that she cannot receive you to-day. She and the Contessa belong to a society of ladies formed for visiting the poor, and this is their day; but to-morrow you must dine with us *en famille*. Now to business. Allow me to light my cigar while you confide the whole state of affairs to Enguerrand: whatever he counsels, I am sure to approve."

Alain, as briefly as he could, stated his circumstances, his mortgages, and the hopes which his *avoué* had encouraged him to place in the friendly disposition of M. Louvier. When he had concluded, Enguerrand mused for a few moments before replying. At last he said, "Will you trust me to call on Louvier on your behalf? I shall but inquire if he is inclined to take on himself the other mortgages; and if so, on what terms. Our relationship gives me the excuse for my interference; and to say truth, I have had much familiar intercourse with the man. I too am a speculator, and have often profited by Louvier's advice. You may ask what can be his object in serving me; he can gain nothing by it. To this I answer, the key to his good offices is in his character. Audacious though he be as a speculator, he is wonderfully prudent as a politician. This *belle France* of ours is like a stage tumbler; one can never be sure whether it will stand on its head or its feet. Louvier very wisely wishes to feel himself safe whatever party comes uppermost. He has no faith in the duration of the Empire; and as, at all events, the Empire will not confiscate his millions, he takes no trouble in conciliating Imperialists. But on the principle which induces certain savages to worship the devil and neglect the *bon Dieu*, because the devil is spiteful and the *bon Dieu* is too beneficent to injure them, Louvier, at heart detesting as well as dreading a republic, lays himself out to secure friends with the republicans of all classes, and pretends to espouse their cause. Next to them, he is very conciliatory to the Orleanists. Lastly, though he thinks the Legitimists have no chance, he desires to keep well with the nobles of that party, because they exercise a considerable influence over that sphere of opinion which belongs to fashion; for fashion is never powerless in Paris. Raoul and myself are no mean authorities in *salons* and clubs; and a good word from us is worth having.

"Besides, Louvier himself in his youth set up for a dandy; and that deposed ruler of dandies, our unfortunate kinsman, Victor de Manléon, shed some of his own radiance on the money-lender's son, But when Victor's star was eclipsed, Louvier ceased to gleam. The dandies cut him. In his heart he exults that the dandies now throng to his *soirées*. *Bref*, the *millionnaire* is especially civil to me—the more so as I know intimately two or three eminent journalists; and Louvier takes pains to plant garrisons in the press. I trust I have explained the grounds on which I may be a better diplomatist to employ than your

avoué; and with your leave I will go to Louvier at once."

"Let him go," said Raoul. "Enguerrand never fails in anything he undertakes, especially," he added, with a smile half sad, half tender, "when one wishes to replenish one's purse."

"I too gratefully grant such an ambassador all powers to treat," said Alain. "I am only ashamed to consign to him a post so much beneath his genius," and his "birth" he was about to add, but wisely checked himself. Enguerrand said, shrugging his shoulders, You can't do me a greater kindness than by setting my wits at work. I fall a martyr to *ennui* when I am not in action,' he said, and was gone.

"It makes me very melancholy at times," said Raoul, flinging away the end of his cigar, "to think that a man so clever and so energetic as Enguerrand should be as much excluded from the service of his country as if he were an Iroquois Indian. He would have made a great diplomatist."

"Alas!" replied Alain, with a sigh, "I begin to doubt whether we Legitimists are justified in maintaining a useless loyalty to a sovereign who renders us morally exiles in the land of our birth."

"I have no doubt on the subject," said Raoul. "We are not justified on the score of policy, but we have no option at present on the score of honor. We should gain so much for ourselves if we adopted the State livery and took the State wages that no man would esteem us as patriots; we should only be despised as apostates. So long as Henry V. lives, and does not resign his claim, we cannot be active citizens; we must be mournful lookers-on. But what matters it? We nobles of the old race are becoming rapidly extinct. Under any form of government likely to be established in France we are equally doomed. The French people, aiming at an impossible equality, will never again tolerate a race of *gentilshommes*. They cannot prevent, without destroying commerce and capital altogether, a quick succession of men of the day, who form nominal aristocracies much more opposed to equality than any hereditary class of nobles. But they refuse these fleeting substitutes of born patricians all permanent stake in the country, since whatever estate they buy must be subdivided at their death. My poor Alain, you are making it the one ambition of your life to preserve to your posterity the home and lands of your forefathers. How is that possible, even supposing you could redeem the mortgages? You marry some day —you have children, and Rochebriant must then be sold to pay for their separate portions. How this condition of things, while rendering us so ineffective to perform the normal functions of a *noblesse* in public life, affects us in private life, may be easily conceived.

"Condemned to a career of pleasure and frivolity, we can scarcely escape from the contagion of extravagant luxury which forms the vice of the time. With grand names to keep up, and small fortunes whereon to keep them, we readily incur embarrassment and debt. Then neediness conquers pride. We cannot be great merchants, but we can be small gamblers on the Bourse, or, thanks to the *Crédit Mobilier*, imitate a cabinet minister, and keep a shop under another name. Perhaps you have heard that Enguerrand and I keep a shop. Pray, buy your gloves there. Strange fate for men whose ancestors fought in the first Crusade—*mais que voulez vous?*"

"I was told of the shop," said Alain, "but the moment I knew you I disbelieved the story."

"Quite true. Shall I confide to you why we resorted to that means of finding ourselves in pocket-money? My father gives us rooms in his hotel; the use of his table, which we do not much profit by; and an allowance, on which we could not live as young men of our class live at Paris. Enguerrand had his means of spending pocket-money, I mine; but it came to the same thing—the pockets were emptied. We incurred debts. Two years ago my father straitened himself to pay them, saying, 'The next time you come to me with debts, however small, you must pay them yourselves, or you must marry, and leave it to me to find you wives.' This threat appalled us both. A month afterwards, Enguerrand made a lucky hit at the Bourse, and proposed to invest the proceeds in a shop. I resisted as long as I could, but Enguerrand triumphed over me, as he always does. He found an excellent deputy in a *bonne* who had nursed us in childhood, and married a journeyman perfumer who understands the business. It answers well; we are not in debt, and we have preserved our freedom."

After these confessions Raoul went away, and Alain fell into a mournful reverie, from which he was roused by a loud ring at his bell. He opened the door, and beheld M. Louvier. The burly financier was much out of breath after making so steep an ascent. It was in gasps that he muttered, "*Bonjour;* excuse me if I derange you." Then entering and seating himself on a chair, he took some minutes to recover speech, rolling his eyes staringly round the meagre, unluxurious room, and then concentrating their gaze upon its occupier.

"*Peste*, my dear Marquis!" he said at last, "I hope the next time I visit you the ascent may be less arduous. One would think you were in training to ascend the Himalaya."

The haughty noble writhed under the jest, and the spirit inborn in his order spoke in his answer.

"I am accustomed to dwell on heights, M. Louvier; the castle of Rochebriant is not on a level with the town."

An angry gleam shot from the eyes of the *millionnaire*, but there was no other sign of displeasure in his answer.

"*Bien dit, mon cher;* how you remind me of your father! Now, give me leave to speak on affairs. I have seem your cousin Enguerrand de Vandemar. *Homme de moyens* though *joli garçon.* He proposed that you should call on me. I said 'no' to the *cher petit* Enguerrand—a visit from me was due to you. To cut matters short, M. Gandrin has allowed me to look into your papers. I was disposed to serve you from the first—I am still more disposed to serve you now. I undertake to pay off all your other mortgages, and become sole mortgagee, and on terms that I have jotted down on this paper, and which I hope will content you."

He placed a paper in Alain's hand, and took out a box, from which he extracted a jujube, placed it in his mouth, folded his hands, and reclined back in his chair, with his eyes half closed, as if exhausted alike by his ascent and his generosity.

In effect, the terms were unexpectedly liberal. The reduced interest on the mortgages would leave the Marquis an income of £1,000 a-year instead of £400. Louvier proposed to take on himself the legal cost of transfer, and to pay to the Marquis 25,000 francs, on the completion of the deed, as a bonus. The mortgage did not exempt the building-land, as Hébert desired. In all else it was singularly advantageous, and Alain could but feel a thrill of grateful delight at an offer by which his stinted income was raised to comparative affluence.

"Well, Marquis," said Louvier, "what does the castle say to the town?"

"M. Louvier," answered Alain, extending his hand with cordial eagerness, "accept my sincere apologies for the indiscretion of my metaphor. Poverty is proverbially sensitive to jests on it. I owe it to you if I cannot hereafter make that excuse for any words of mine that may displease you. The terms you propose are most liberal, and I close with them at once."

"*Bon*," said Louvier, shaking vehemently the hand offered to him; "I will take the paper to Gandrin, and instruct him accordingly. And now, may I attach a condition to the agreement which is not put down on paper? It may have surprised you perhaps that I should propose a gratuity of 25,000 francs on completion of the contract. It is a droll thing to do, and not in the ordinary way of business, therefore I must explain. Marquis, pardon the liberty I take, but you have inspired me with an interest in your future. With your birth, connections, and figure, you should push your way in the world far and fast. But you can't do so in a province. You must find your opening at Paris. I wish you to spend a year in the capital, and live, not extravagantly, like a *nouveau riche*, but in a way not unsuited to your rank, and permitting you all the social advantages that belong to it. These 25,000 francs, in addition to your improved income, will enable you to gratify my wish in this respect. Spend the money in Paris; you will want every *sou* of it in the course of the year. It will be money well spent. Take my advice, *cher Marquis. Au plaisir.*"

The financier bowed himself out. The young Marquis forgot all the mournful reflections with which Raoul's conversation had inspired him. He gave a new touch to his toilette, and sallied forth with the air of a man on whose morning of life a sun heretofore clouded his burst forth and bathed the landscape in its light.

CHAPTER VIII.

SINCE the evening spent at the Savarins', Graham had seen no more of Isaura. He had avoided all chance of seeing her—in fact, the jealousy with which he had viewed her manner towards Rameau, and the angry amaze with which he had heard her proclaim her friendship for Madame de Grantmesnil, served to strengthen the grave and secret reasons which made him desire to keep his heart yet free and his hand yet unpledged. But, alas! the heart was enslaved already. It was under the most fatal of all spells—first love conceived at first sight. He was wretched; and in his wretchedness his resolves became involuntarily weakened. He found himself making excuses for the beloved. What cause had he, after all, for that jealousy of the young poet which had so offended him? And if, in her youth and inexperience, Isaura had made her dearest friend of a great writer by whose genius she might be dazzled, and of whose opinions she might scarcely be aware was it a crime that necessitated her eternal banishishment from the reverence which belongs to all manly love? Certainly he found no satisfactory answers to such self-questionings. And then those grave reasons known only to himself, and never to be confided to another—why he should yet reserve his hand unpledged—were not so imperative as to admit of no compromise. They might entail a sacrifice, and not a small one to a man of Graham's views and ambition. But what is love if it can think any sacrifice, short of duty and honor, too great to offer up unknown, uncomprehended. to the one beloved? Still while thus softened in his feelings towards Isaura, he became, perhaps in consequence of such softening, more and more restlessly impatient to fulfil the object for which he had come to Paris, the great step towards which was the discovery of the undiscoverable Louise Duval.

He had written more than once to M. Renard since the interview with that functionary already recorded, demanding whether Renard had not made some progress in the research on which he was employed, and had received short unsatisfactory replies preaching patience and implying hope.

The plain truth, however, was, that M. Renard had taken no further pains in the matter. He considered it utter waste of time and thought to attempt a discovery to which the traces were so faint and so obsolete. If the discovery were effected, it must be by one of those chances which occur without labor or forethought of our own. He trusted only to such a chance in continuing the charge he had undertaken. But during the last day or two Graham had become yet more impatient than before, and peremptorily requested another visit from this dilatory confidant.

In that visit, finding himself pressed hard, and though naturally willing, if possible, to retain a client unusually generous, yet being, on the whole, an honest member of his profession, and feeling it to be somewhat unfair to accept large remuneration for doing nothing, M. Renard said frankly, "Monsieur, this affair is beyond me; the keenest agent of our police could make nothing of it. Unless you can tell me more than you have done, I am utterly without a clue. I resign, therefore, the task with which you honored me, willing to resume it again if you can give me information that could render me of use."

"What sort of information?"

"At least the names of some of the lady's relations who may yet be living."

"But it strikes me that, if I could get at that piece of knowledge, I should not require the services of the police. The relations would tell me what had become of Louise Duval quite as readily as they would tell a police agent."

"Quite true, Monsieur. It would really be picking your pockets if I did not at once retire from your service. Nay, Monsieur, pardon me, no further payments; I have already accepted too much. Your most obedient servant."

Graham, left alone, fell into a very gloomy reverie. He could not but be sensible of the difficulties in the way of the object which had brought him to Paris, with somewhat sanguine expectations of success founded on a belief in the omniscience of the Parisian police, which is only to be justified when they have to deal with a murderess or a political incendiary. But the name of Louise Duval is about as common in France as that of Mary Smith in England; and the English reader may judge what would be the likely result of inquiring through the ablest of our detectives after

some Mary Smith of whom you could give little more information than that she was the daughter of a drawing-master who had died twenty years ago, that it was about fifteen years since anything had been heard of her, that you could not say if, through marriage or for other causes, she had changed her name or not, and you had reasons for declining resort to public advertisements. In the course of inquiry so instituted, the probability would be that you might hear of a great many Mary Smiths, in the pursuit of whom your *employé* would lose all sight and scent of the one Mary Smith for whom the chase was instituted.

In the midst of Graham's despairing reflections his *laquais* announced M. Frederic Lemercier.

"*Cher* Grarm-Varn. A thousand pardons if I disturb you at this late hour of the evening; but you remember the request you made me when you first arrived in Paris this season?"

"Of course I do—in case you should ever chance in your wide round of acquaintance to fall in with a Madame or Mademoiselle Duval of about the age of forty, or a year or so less, to let me know: and you did fall in with two ladies of that name, but they were not the right one—not the person whom my friend begged me to discover—both much too young."

"*Eh bien, mon cher.* If you will come with me to the *bal champêtre* in the Champs Elysées to-night, I can show you a third Madame Duval; her Christian name is Louise, too, of the age you mention—though she does her best to look younger, and is still very handsome. You said your Duval was handsome. It was only last evening that I met this lady at a *soirée* given by Mademoiselle Julie Caumartin, *coryphée distinguée*, in love with young Rameau."

"In love with young Rameau? I am very glad to hear it. He returns the love?"

"I suppose so. He seems very proud of it. But *à propos* of Madame Duval, she has been long absent from Paris—just returned—and looking out for conquests. She says she has a great *penchant* for the English; promises me to be at this ball—come."

"Hearty thanks, my dear Lemercier. I am at your service."

CHAPTER IX.

THE *bal champêtre* was gay and billiant, as such festal scenes are at Paris. A lovely night in the midst of May—lamps below and stars above: the society mixed, of course. Evidently, when Graham had singled out Frederic Lemercier from all his acquaintances at Paris, to conjoin with the official aid of M. Renard in search of the mysterious lady, he had conjectured the probability that she might be found in the Bohemian world so familiar to Frederic; if not as an inhabitant, at least as an explorer. Bohemia was largely represented at the *bal champêtre*, but not without a fair sprinkling of what we call the "respectable classes," especially English and Americans, who brought their wives there to take care of them. Frenchmen, not needing such care, prudently left their wives at home. Among the Frenchmen of station were the Comte de Passy and the Vicomte de Brézé.

On first entering the gardens, Graham's eye was attracted and dazzled by a brilliant form. It was standing under a festoon of flowers extended from tree to tree, and a gas jet opposite shone full upon the face—the face of a girl in all the freshness of youth. If the freshness owed anything to art, the art was so well disguised that it seemed nature. The beauty of the countenance was Hebe-like, joyous, and radiant, and yet one could not look at the girl without a sentiment of deep mournfulness. She was surrounded by a group of young men, and the ring of her laugh jarred upon Graham's ear. He pressed Frederic's arm, and directing his attention to the girl, asked who she was.

"Who? Don't you know? That is Julie Caumartin. A little while ago her equipage was the most admired in the Bois, and great ladies condescended to copy her dress or her *coiffure*. But she has lost her splendor, and dismissed the rich admirer who supplied the fuel for its blaze, since she fell in love with Gustave Rameau. Doubtless she is expecting him to-night. You ought to know her; shall I present you?"

"No," answered Graham, with a compassionate expression in his manly face. "So young; seemingly so gay. How I pity her!"

"What! for throwing herself away on Rameau? True. There is a great deal of good

in that girl's nature, if she had been properly trained. Rameau wrote a pretty poem on her which turned her head and won her heart, in which she is styled the 'Ondine of Paris,'—a nymph-like type of Paris itself."

"Vanishing type, like her namesake; born of the spray, and vanishing soon into the deep," said Graham. "Pray go and look for the Duval; you will find me seated yonder."

Graham passed into a retired alley, and threw himself on a solitary bench, while Lemercier went in search of Madame Duval. In a few minutes the Frenchman reappeared. By his side was a lady well dressed, and as she passed under the lamps Graham perceived that, though of a certain age, she was undeniably handsome. His heart beat more quickly. Surely this was the Louise Duval he sought.

He rose from his seat, and was presented in due form to the lady, with whom Frederic then discreetly left him.

"Monsieur Lemercier tells me that you think that we were once acquainted with each other."

"Nay, Madame; I should not fail to recognize you were that the case. A friend of mine had the honor of knowing a lady of your name; and should I be fortunate enough to meet that lady, I am charged with a commission that may not be unwelcome to her. M. Lemercier tells me your *non de baptême* is Louise."

"Louise Corinne, Monsieur."

"And I presume that Duval is the name you take from your parents?"

"No; my father's name was Bernard. I married, when I was a mere child, M. Duval, in the wine trade at Bordeaux."

"Ah, indeed!" said Graham, much disappointed, but looking at her with a keen, searching eye, which she met with a decided frankness. Evidently, in his judgment, she was speaking the truth.

"You know English. I think Madame," he resumed, addressing her in that language.

"A leetle—speak *un peu*."

"Only a little?"

Madame Duval looked puzzled, and replied in French, with a laugh. "Is it that you were told that I spoke English by your countryman, Milord Sare Boulby? *Petit scélérat*, I hope he is well. He sends you a commission for me—so he ought: he behaved to me like a monster.'

"Alas! I know nothing of Milord Sir Boulby. Were you never in England yourself?"

"Never"—with a coquettish side glance—"I should like so much to go. I have a foible for the English in spite of that *vilain petit* Boulby. Who is it gave you the commission for me? Ha! I guess—le Capitaine Nelton."

"No. What year, Madame, if not impertinent, were you at Aix-la-Chapelle?"

"You mean Baden? I was there seven years ago, when I met le Capitaine Nelton—*bel homme aux cheveux rouges*."

"But you have been at Aix?"

"Never."

"I have, then, been mistaken, Madame, and have only to offer my most humble apologies."

"But perhaps you will favor me with a visit, and we may on further conversation find that you are not mistaken. I can't stay now, for I am engaged to dance with the Belgian of whom, no doubt, M. Lemercier has told you.'

"No, Madame, he has not."

"Well, then, he will tell you. The Belgian is very jealous. But I am always at home between three and four; this is my card."

Graham eagerly took the card, and exclaimed, "Is this your own hand-writing, Madame?"

"Yes, indeed."

"*Très belle écriture*," said Graham, and receded with a ceremonius bow. "Anything so unlike *her* handwriting. Another disappointment," muttered the Englishman as the lady went back to the ball.

A few minutes later Graham joined Lemercier, who was talking with De Passy and De Brézé.

"Well," said Lemercier, when his eye rested on Graham, "I hit the right nail on the head this time, eh?"

Graham shook his head.

"What! is she not the right Louise Duval?"

"Certainly not."

The Count de Passy overheard the name, and turned. "Louise Duval," he said; "does Monsieur Vane know a Louise Duval?"

"No; but a friend asked me to inquire after a lady of that name whom he had met many years ago at Paris." The Count mused a moment, and said, "Is it possible that your friend knew the family De Mauléon?"

"I really can't say. What then?"

"The old Vicomte de Mauléon was one of my most intimate associates. In fact, our houses are connected. And he was extremely grieved, poor man, when his daughter Louise married her drawing-master, Auguste Duval."

"Her drawing-master. Auguste Duval? Pray say on. I think the Louise Duval my friend knew must have been her daughter. She was the only child of a drawing-master or artist named Auguste Duval, and probably enough her Christian name would have been derived from her mother. A Mademoiselle de Mauléon, then married M. Auguste Duval?"

"Yes; the old Vicomte had espoused *en premières noces* Mademoiselle Camille de Chavigny, a lady of birth equal to his own,—had by her one daughter, Louise. I recollect her well,—a plain girl, with a high nose and a sour expression. She was just of age when the first Vicomtesse died, and by the marriage settlement she succeeded at once to her mother's fortune, which was not large. The Vicomte was, however, so poor that the loss of that income was no trifle to him. Though much past fifty, he was still very handsome. Men of that generation did not age soon, Monsieur," said the Count, expanding his fine chest and laughing exultingly.

"He married, *en secondes noces*, a lady of still higher birth than the first, and with a much larger *dot*. Louise was indignant at this, hated her stepmother; and when a son was born by the second marriage she left the paternal roof, went to reside with an old female relative near the Luxembourg, and there married this drawing-master. Her father and the family did all they could to prevent it; but in these democratic days a woman who has attained her majority can, if she persist in her determination, marry to please herself and disgrace her ancestors. After that *mésalliance* her father never would see her again. I tried in vain to soften him. All his parental affections settled on his handsome Victor. Ah! you are too young to have known Victor de Mauléon during his short reign at Paris—as *roi des viveurs*."

"Yes, he was before my time; but I have heard of him as a young man of great fashion—said to be very clever, a duellist, and a sort of Don Juan."

"Exactly."

"And then I remember vaguely to have heard that he committed, or was said to have committed, some villainous action connected with a great lady's jewels, and to have left Paris in consequence."

"Ah, yes—a sad scrape. At that time there was a political crisis; we were under a Republic; anything against a noble was believed. But I am sure Victor de Mauléon was not the man to commit a larceny. However it is quite true that he left Paris, and I don't know what has become of him since." Here he touched De Brézé, who, though still near, had not been listening to this conversation, but interchanging jest and laughter with Lemercier on the motley scene of the dance.

"De Brézé, have you ever heard what became of poor dear Victor de Mauléon?—you knew him."

"Knew him? I should think so. Who could be in the great world and not know *le beau* Victor? No; after he vanished I never heard more of him—doubtless long since dead. A good-hearted fellow in spite of all his sins."

"My dear M. de Brézé, did you know his half-sister?" asked Graham—"a Madame Duval?"

"No. I never heard he had a half-sister. Halt there: I recollect that I met Victor once, in the garden at Versailles, walking arm-in-arm with the most beautiful girl I ever saw; and when I complimented him afterwards at the Jockey Club on his new conquest, he replied very gravely that the young lady was his niece. 'Niece!' said I; 'why, there can't be more than five or six years between you.' 'About that, I suppose,' said he; 'my half-sister, her mother, was more than twenty years older than I at the time of my birth.' I doubted the truth of his story at the time; but since you say he really had a sister, my doubt wronged him."

"Have you never seen that same young lady since?"

"Never."

"How many years ago was this?"

"Let me see—about twenty or twenty-one years ago. How time flies!"

Graham still continued to question, but could learn no farther particulars. He turned to quit the gardens just as the band was striking up for a fresh dance, a wild German waltz air, and mingled with that German music his

ear caught the sprightly sounds of the French laugh, one laugh distinguished from the rest by a more genuine ring of light-hearted joy—the laugh that he had heard on entering the gardens, and the sound of which had then saddened him Looking toward the quarter from which it came, he again saw the "Ondine of Paris." She was not now the centre of a group. She had just found Gustave Rameau; and was clinging to his arm with a look of happiness in her face, frank and innocent as a child's. And so they passed amid the dancers down a solitary lamplit alley, till lost to the Englishman's lingering gaze.

CHAPTER X.

The next morning Graham sent again for M. Renard.

"Well," he cried, when that dignitary appeared and took a seat beside him; "chance has favored me."

"I always counted on chance, Monsieur. Chance has more wit in its little finger than the Paris police in its whole body."

"I have ascertained the relations, on the mother's side, of Louise Duval, and the only question is how to get at them."

Here Graham related what he had heard, and ended by saying, "This Victor de Mauléon is therefore my Louise Duval's uncle. He was, no doubt, taking charge of her in the year that the persons interested in her discovery lost sight of her in Paris; and surely he must know what became of her afterwards."

"Very probably; and chance may befriend us yet in the discovery of Victor de Mauléon. You seem not to know the particulars of that story about the jewels which brought him into some connection with the police, and resulted in his disappearance from Paris."

"No; tell me particulars."

"Victor de Mauléon was heir to some 60,000 or 70,000 francs a year, chiefly on the mother's side; for his father, though the representative of one of the most ancient houses in Normandy, was very poor, having little of his own except the emoluments of an appointment in the Court of Louis Philippe.

"But before, by the death of his parents, Victor came into that inheritance, he very largely forestalled it. His tastes were magnificent. He took to 'sport'—kept a famous stud, was a great favorite with the English, and spoke their language fluently. Indeed, he was considered very accomplished, and of considerable intellectual powers. It was generally said that some day or other, when he had sown his wild oats, he would, if he took to politics, be an eminent man. Altogether he was a very strong creature. That was a very strong age under Louis Philippe. The *viveurs* of Paris were fine types for the heroes of Dumas and Sue—full of animal life and spirits. Victor de Mauléon was a romance of Dumas—incarnated."

"M. Renard, forgive me that I did not before do justice to your taste in polite literature."

"Monsieur, a man in my profession does not attain even to my humble eminence if he be not something else than a professional. He must study mankind wherever they are described—even in *les romans*. To return to Victor de Mauléon. Though he was a 'sportsman,' a gambler, a Don Juan, a duellist, nothing was ever said against his honor. On the contrary, on matters of honor he was a received oracle; and even though he had fought several duels (that was the age of duels), and was reported without a superior, almost without an equal, in either weapon—the sword or the pistol—he is said never to have wantonly provoked an encounter, and to have so used his skill that he contrived never to slay, nor even gravely to wound, an antagonist.

"I remember one instance of his generosity in this respect, for it was much talked of at the time. One of your countrymen, who had never handled a fencing-foil nor fired a pistol, took offence at something M. de Mauléon had said in disparagement of the Duke of Wellington, and called him out. Victor de Mauléon accepted the challenge, discharged his pistol, not in the air——that might have been an affront—but so as to be wide of the mark, walked up to the lines to be shot at, and when missed, said—'Excuse the suceptibility of a Frenchman, loth to believe that his countrymen can be beaten save by accident, and accept every apology one gentleman can make to another for having forgotten the respect due to one of the most renowned of your

national heroes.' The Englishman's name was Vane. Could it have been your father?"

"Very probably; just like my father to call out any man who insulted the honor of his country, as represented by its men. I hope the two combatants became friends?"

"That I never heard; the duel was over—there my story ends."

"Pray go on."

"One day—it was in the midst of political events which would have silenced the most subjects of private gossip—the *beau monde* was startled by the news that the Vicomte (he was then, at his father's death, Vicomte) de Mauléon had been given into the custody of the police on the charge of stealing the jewels of the Duchesse de——(the wife of a distinguished foreigner). It seems that some days before this event, the Duc, wishing to make Madame his spouse an agreeable surprise, had resolved to have a diamond necklace belonging to her, and which was of setting so old-fashioned that she had not lately worn it, reset for her birthday. He therefore secretly possessed himself of the key to an iron safe in a cabinet adjourning her dressing-room (in which safe her more valuable jewels were kept), and took from it the necklace. Imagine his dismay when the jeweller in the Rue Vivienne to whom he carried it, recognized the pretended diamonds as imitation paste which he himself had some days previously inserted into an empty setting brought to him by a Monsieur with whose name he was unacquainted. The Duchesse was at that time in delicate health; and as the Duc's suspicions naturally fell on the servants, especially on the *femme de chambre*, who was in great favor with his wife, he did not like to alarm Madame, nor through her to put the servants on their guard. He resolved, therefore, to place the matter in the hands of the famous ——, who was then the pride and the ornament of the Parisian police. And the very night afterwards the Vicomte de Mauléon was caught and apprehended in the cabinet where the jewels were kept, and to which he had got access by a false key, or at least a duplicate key, found in his possession. I should observe that M. de Mauléon occupied the *entresol* in the same hotel in which the upper rooms were devoted to the Duc and Duchesse and their suite. As soon as this charge against the Vicomte was made known (and it was known the next morning), the extent of his debts and the utterness of his ruin (before scarcely conjectured or wholly unheeded) became public through the medium of the journals, and furnished an obvious motive for the crime of which he was accused. We Parisians, Monsieur, are subject to the most startling reactions of feeling. The men we adore one day we execrate the next. The Vicomte passed at once from the popular admiration one bestows on a hero, to the popular contempt with which one regards a petty larcener. Society wondered how it had ever condescended to receive into its bosom the gambler, the duellist, the Don Juan. However, one compensation in the way of amusement he might still afford to society for the grave injuries he had done it. Society would attend his trial, witness his demeanor at the bar, and watch the expression of his face when he was sentenced to the galleys. But, Monsieur, this wretch completed the measure of his iniquities. He was not tried at all. The Duc and Duchesse quitted Paris for Spain, and the Duc instructed his lawyer to withdraw his charge, stating his conviction of the Vicomte's complete innocence of any other offence than that which he himself had confessed."

"What did the Vicomte confess? You omitted to state that."

"The Vicomte, when apprehended, confessed that, smitten by an insane passion for the Duchesse, which she had, on his presuming to declare it, met with indignant scorn, he had taken advantage of his lodgment in the same house to admit himself into the cabinet adjoining her dressing-room by means of a key which he had procured, made from an impression of the key-hole taken in wax.

"No evidence in support of any other charge against the Vicomte was forthcoming—nothing, in short, beyond the *infraction du domicile* caused by the madness of youthful love, and for which there was no prosecution. The law, therefore, could have little to say against him. But society was more rigid; and, exceedingly angry to find that a man who had been so conspicuous for luxury should prove to be a pauper, insisted on believing that M. de Mauléon was guilty of the meaner, though not perhaps, in the eyes of husbands and fathers, the more heinous, of the two offences. I presume that the Vicomte felt that he had got into a dilemma from which no pistol-shot or sword-thrust could

free him, for he left Paris abruptly, and has not since reappeared. The sale of his stud and effects sufficed, I believe, to pay his debts, for I will do him the justice to say that they were paid."

"But though the Vicomte de Mauléon has disappeared, he must have left relations at Paris, who would perhaps know what has become of him and of his niece."

"I doubt it. He had no very near relations. The nearest was an old *célibalaire* of the same name, from whom he had some expectations, but who died shortly after this *esclandre*, and did not name the Vicomte in his will. M. Victor had numerous connections among the highest families—the Rochebriants, Chavignys, Vandemars, Passys, Beauvilliers. But they are not likely to have retained any connection with a ruined *vaurien*, and still less with a niece of his who was the child of a drawing-master. But now you have given me a clue, I will try to follow it up. We must find the Vicomte, and I am not without hope of doing so. Pardon me if I decline to say more at present. I would not raise false expectations. But in a week or two I will have the honor to call again upon Monsieur."

"Wait one instant. Have you really a hope of discovering M. de Mauléon?"

"Yes. I cannot say more at present."

M. Renard departed.

Still that hope, however faint it might prove, served to re-animate Graham; and with that hope his heart, as if a load had been lifted from its mainspring, returned instinctively to the thought of Isaura. Whatever seemed to promise an early discharge of the commission connected with the discovery of Louise Duval seemed to bring Isaura nearer to him, or at least to excuse his yearning desire to see more of her—to understand her better. Faded into thin air was the vague jealousy of Gustave Rameau which he had so unreasonably conceived; he felt as if it were impossible that the man whom the "Ondine of Paris" claimed as her lover could dare to woo or hope to win an Isaura. He even forgot the friehdship with the eloquent denouncer of the marriage-bond, which a little while ago had seemed to him an unpardonable offence: he remembered only the lovely face, so innocent, yet so intelligent; only the sweet voice which had for the first time breathed music into his own soul; only the gentle hand whose touch had for the first time sent through his veins the thrill which distinguishes from all her sex the woman whom we love. He went forth elated and joyous, and took his way to Isaura's villa. As he went, the leaves on the trees under which he passed seemed stirred by the soft May breeze in sympathy with his own delight. Perhaps it was rather the reverse: his own silent delight sympathized with all delight in awakening nature. The lover seeking reconciliation with the loved one, from whom some trifle has unreasonably estranged him, in a cloudless day of May,—if he be not happy enough to feel a brotherhood in all things happy—a leaf in bloom, a bird in song—then indeed he may call himself lover, but he does not know what is love.

BOOK FOURTH.

CHAPTER I.

From Isaura Cicogna to Madame de Grantmesnil.

IT is many days since I wrote to you, and but for your delightful note just received, reproaching me for silence, I should still be under the spell of that awe which certain words of M. Savarin were well fitted to produce. Chancing to ask him if he had written to you lately, he said, with that laugh of his, good-humoredly ironical, "No, Mademoiselle, I am not one of the *Fâcheux* whom Molière has immortalized. If the meeting of lovers should be sacred from the intrusion of a third person, however amiable, more sacred still should be the parting between an author and his work. Madame de Grantmesnil is in that moment so solemn to a genius earnest as hers—she is bidding farewell to a companion with whom, once dismissed into the world, she can never converse familiarly again; it ceases to be her companion when it becomes ours. Do not let us disturb the last hours they will pass together."

These words struck me much. I suppose there is truth in them. I can comprehend that a work which has long been all in all to its author, concentrating his thoughts, gathering round it the hopes and fears of his inmost heart, dies, as it were, to him when he has completed its life for others, and launched it into a world estranged from the solitude in which it was born and formed. I can almost conceive that, to a writer like you, the very fame which attends the work thus sent forth chills your own love for it. The characters you created in a fairyland known but to yourself, must lose something of their mysterious charm when you hear them discussed and cavilled at, blamed or praised, as if they were really the creatures of streets and *salons*.

I wonder if hostile criticism pains or enrages you as it seems to do such other authors as I have known. M. Savarin, for instance, sets down in his tablets as an enemy to whom vengeance is due the smallest scribbler who wounds his self-love, and says frankly: "To me praise is food, dispraise is poison. Him who feeds me I pay; him who poisons me I break on the wheel." M. Savarin is, indeed, a skilful and energetic administrator to his own reputation. He deals with it as if it were a kingdom—establishes fortifications for its defence—enlists soldiers to fight for it. He is the soul and centre of a confederation in which each is bound to defend the territory of the others, and all those territories united constitute the imperial realm of M. Savarin. Don't think me an ungracious satirist in what I am thus saying of our brilliant friend. It is not I who here speak; it is himself. He avows his policy with the *naivete* which makes the charm of his style as writer. "It is the greatest mistake," he said to me yesterday, "to talk of the Republic of Letters. Every author who wins a name is a sovereign in his own domain, be it large or small. Woe to any republican who wants to dethrone me!" Somehow or other, when M. Savarin thus talks I feel as if he were betraying the cause of genius. I cannot bring myself to regard literature as a craft—to me it is a sacred mission; and in hearing this "sovereign" boast of the tricks by which he maintains his state, I seem to listen to a priest who treats as imposture the religion he professes to teach. M. Savarin's favorite *eleve* now is a young contributor to his journal, named Gustave Rameau. M. Savarin said the other day in my hearing, "I and my set were *Young France*—Gustave Rameau and his set are *New Paris*."

"And what is the distinction between the one and the other?" asked my American friend Mrs. Morley.

"The set of 'Young France,' answered M. Savarin, "had in it the hearty consciousness of youth: it was bold and vehement, with abundant vitality and animal spirits; whatever may be said against it in other respects, the power of thews and sinews must be conceded to its chief representatives. But the set of 'New Paris' has very bad health, and very indifferent spirits. Still, in its way, it is very clever; it can sting and bite as keenly as if it were big and strong. Rameau is the most promising member of the set. He will be popular in his time, because he represents a good deal of the mind of his time—viz., the mind and the time of 'New Paris.'"

Do you know anything of this young Rameau's writings? You do not know himself, for he told me so, expressing a desire, that was evidently very sincere, to find some occasion on which to render you his homage. He said this the first time I met him at M. Savarin's, and before he knew how dear to me are yourself and your fame. He came and sate by me after dinner, and won my interest at once by asking me if I had heard that you were busied on a new work; and then, without waiting for my answer, he launched forth into praises of you, which made a notable contrast to the scorn with which he spoke of all your contemporaries, except indeed M. Savarin, who, however, might not have been pleased to hear his favorite pupil style him "a great writer in small things." I spare you his epigrams on Dumas and Victor Hugo, and my beloved Lamartine. Though his talk was showy, and dazzled me at first, I soon got rather tired of it—even the first time we met. Since then I have seen him very often, not only at M. Savarin's, but he calls here at least every other day, and we have become quite good friends. He gains on acquaintance so far that one cannot help feeling how much he is to be pitied. He is so envious!

and the envious must be so unhappy. And then he is at once so near and so far from all the things that he envies. He longs for riches and luxury, and can only as yet earn a bare competence by his labors. Therefore he hates the rich and luxurious. His literary successes, instead of pleasing him, render him miserable by their contrast with the fame of the authors whom he envies and assails. He has a beautiful head, of which he is conscious, but it is joined to a body without strength or grace. He is conscious of this too: but it is cruel to go on with this sketch. You can see at once the kind of person who, whether he inspire affection or dislike, cannot fail to create an interest—painful but compassionate.

You will be pleased to hear that Dr. C. considers my health so improved, that I may next year enter fairly on the profession for which I was intended and trained. Yet I still feel hesitating and doubtful. To give myself wholly up to the art in which I am told I could excel, must alienate me entirely from the ambition that yearns for fields in which, alas! it may perhaps never appropriate to itself a rood for culture—only wander, lost in a vague fairyland, to which it has not the fairy's birthright. O thou great enchantress, to whom are equally subject the streets of Paris and the realm of Faerie—thou who hast sounded to the deeps that circumfluent ocean called "practical human life," and hast taught the acutest of its navigators to consider how far its courses are guided by orbs in heaven—canst thou solve this riddle which, if it perplexes me, must perplex so many? What is the real distinction between the rare genius and the commonalty of human souls that feel to the quick all the grandest and divinest things which the rare genius places before them, sighing within themselves—"This rare genius does but express that which was previously familiar to us, so far as thought and sentiment extend?" Nay, the genius itself, however eloquent, never does, never can, express the whole of the thought or the sentiment it interprets: on the contrary, the greater the genius is, the more it leaves a something of incomplete satisfaction on our minds—it promises so much more than it performs—it implies so much more than it announces. I am impressed with the truth of what I thus say in proportion as I reperuse and restudy the greatest writers that have come within my narrow range of reading. And by the greatest writers I mean those who are not exclusively reasoners (of such I cannot judge), nor mere poets (of whom, so far as concerns the union of words with music, I ought to be able to judge), but the few who unite reason and poetry, and appeal at once to the common-sense of the multitude and the imagination of the few. The highest type of this union to me is Shakespeare; and I can comprehend the justice of no criticism on him which does not allow this sense of incomplete satisfaction augmenting in proportion as the poet soars to his highest. I ask again, in what consists this distinction between the rare genius and the commonalty of minds that exclaim, "He expresses what we feel, but never the whole of what we feel?" Is it the mere power over language, a larger knowledge of dictionaries, a finer ear for period and cadence, a more artistic craft in casing out thoughts and sentiments in well-selected words? Is it true what Buffon says, "that the style is the man?" Is it true what I am told Goethe said, "Poetry is form?" I cannot believe this; and if you tell me it is true, then I no longer pine to be a writer. But if it be not true, explain to me how it is that the greatest genius is popular in proportion as it makes itself akin to us by uttering in better words than we employ that which was already within us, brings to light what in our souls was latent, and does but correct, beautify, and publish the correspondence which an ordinary reader carries on privately every day, between himself and his mind or his heart. If this superiority in the genius be but style and form, I abandon my dream of being something else than a singer of words by another to the music of another. But then, what then? My knowledge of books and art is wonderfully small. What little I do know I gather from very few books, and from what I hear said by the few worth listening to whom I happen to meet; and out of these, in solitude and reverie, not by conscious effort, I arrive at some results which appear to my inexperience original. Perhaps, indeed, they have the same kind of originality as the musical compositions of amateurs who effect a cantata or a quartette made up of borrowed details from great masters, and constituting a whole so original that no real master would deign to own it. Oh, if I could get you to understand how unsettled, how struggling my whole nature at this moment is? I wonder what is the sensation of the chrysalis which has been a silk-worm, when it first feels the new wings stirring within its shell—wings, alas! they are but those of the humblest and shortest-lived sort of moth, scarcely born into daylight before it dies. Could it reason, it might regret its earlier life, and say, "Better be the silk-worm than the moth."

From the Same to the Same.

Have you known well any English people in the course of your life? I say well, for you must have had acquaintance with many. But it seems to me so difficult to know an Englishman well. Even I, who so loved and revered Mr. Selby—I, whose childhood was admitted into his companionship by that love which places ignorance and knowledge, infancy and age, upon ground so equal that heart touches heart—cannot say that I understand the English character to anything like the extent to which I fancy I understand the Italian and the French. Between us of the Continent and them of the island the British Channel always flows. There is an Englishman here to whom I have been introduced, whom I have met, though but seldom, in that society which bounds the Paris world to me. Pray, pray tell me, did you ever know, ever meet him? His name is Graham Vane. He is the only son, I am told, of a man who was a *celebrite* in England as an orator and statesman, and on both sides he belongs to the *hautearistocratie*. He himself has that indescribable air and mien to which we apply the epithet 'distinguished.' In the most crowded *salon* the eye would fix on him, and involuntarily follow his movements. Yet his manners are frank and simple, wholly without the stiffness or reserve which are said to characterize the English.

There is an inborn dignity in his bearing which consists in the absence of all dignity assumed. But what strikes me most in this Englishman is an expression of countenance which the English depict by the word 'open'—that expression which inspires you with a belief in the existence of sincerity. Mrs. Morley said of him, in that poetic extravagance of phrase by which the Americans startle the English—"That man's forehead would light up the Mammoth Cave." Do you not know, Eulalie, what it is to us cultivators of art—art being the expression of truth through fiction—to come

into the atmosphere of one of those souls in which Truth stands out bold and beautiful in itself, and needs no idealization through fiction? Oh, how near we should be to heaven could we live daily, hourly, in the presence of one the honesty of whose word we could never doubt, the authority of whose word we could never disobey! Mr. Vane professes not to understand music—not even to care for it, except rarely—and yet he spoke of its influence over others with an enthusiasm that half charmed me once more back to my destined calling—nay, might have charmed me wholly, but that he seemed to think that I—that any public singer—must be a creature apart from the world—the world in which such men live. Perhaps that is true.

CHAPTER II.

It was one of those lovely noons towards the end of May in which a rural suburb has the mellow charm of summer to him who escapes awhile from the streets of a crowded capital. The Londoner knows its charms when he feels his tread on the softening swards of the Vale of Health, or, pausing at Richmond under the budding willow, gazes on the river glittering in the warmer sunlight, and hears from the villa-gardens behind him the brief trill of the blackbird. But the suburbs round Paris are, I think, a yet more pleasing relief from the metropolis; they are more easily reached, and I know not why, but they seem more rural, perhaps because the contrast of their repose with the stir left behind—of their redundance of leaf and blossom, compared with the prim efflorescence of trees in the Boulevards and Tuileries—is more striking. However that may be, when Graham reached the pretty suburb in which Isaura dwelt, it seemed to him as if all the wheels of the loud busy life were suddenly smitten still. The hour was yet early; he felt sure that he should find Isaura at home. The garden-gate stood unfastened and ajar; he pushed it aside and entered. I think I have before said that the garden of the villa was shut out from the road, and the gaze of neighbors, by a wall and thick belts of evergreens; it stretched behind the house somewhat far for the garden of a suburban villa. He paused when he had passed the gateway, for he heard in the distance the voice of one singing—singing low, singing plaintively. He knew it was the voice of Isaura; he passed on, leaving the house behind him, and tracking the voice till he reached the singer.

Isaura was seated within an arbor towards the further end of the garden—an arbor which, a little later in the year, must indeed be delicate and dainty with lush exuberance of jessamine and woodbine; now into its iron trelliswork leaflet and flowers were insinuating their gentle way. Just at the entrance one white rose—a winter rose that had mysteriously survived its relations—opened its pale hues frankly to the noonday sun. Graham approached slowly, noiselessy, and the last note of the song had ceased when he stood at the entrance of the arbour. Isaura did not perceive him at first, for her face was bent downward musingly, as was often her wont after singing, especially when alone. But she felt that the place was darkened, that something stood between her and the sunshine. She raised her face, and a quick flush mantled over it as she uttered his name, not loudly, not as in surprise, but inwardly and whisperingly, as in a sort of fear.

"Pardon me, Mademoiselle," said Graham, entering; "but I heard your voice as I came into the gardon, and it drew me onward involuntarily. What a lovely air! and what simple sweetness in such of the words as reached me! I am so ignorant of music that you must not laugh at me if I ask whose is the music and whose are the words? Probably both are so well known as to convict me of a barbarous ignorance."

"Oh no," said Isaura, with a still heightened color, and in accents embarrassed and hesitating. "Both the words and music are by an unknown and very humble composer, yet not, indeed, quite original; they have not even that merit—at least they were suggested by a popular song in the Neapolitan dialect which is said to be very old."

"I don't know if I caught the true meaning of the words, for they seemed to me to convey a more subtle and refined sentiment than is common in the popular songs of southern Italy."

"The sentiment in the original is changed in the paraphrase, and not, I fear, improved by the change."

"Will you explain to me the sentiment in both, and let me judge which I prefer?"

"In the Neapolitan song a young fisherman, who has moored his boat under a rock on the shore, sees a beautiful face below the surface

of the waters; he imagines it to be that of a Nereid, and casts in his net to catch this supposed nymph of the ocean. He only disturbs the water, loses the image, and brings up a few common fishes. He returns home disappointed, and very much enamoured of the supposed Nereid. The next day he goes again to the same place, and discovers that the face which had so charmed him was that of a mortal girl reflected on the waters from the rock behind him, on which she had been seated, and on which she had her home. The original air is arch and lively; just listen to it." And Isaura warbled one of those artless and somewhat meagre tunes to which light-stringed instruments are the fitting accompaniment.

"That," said Graham, "is a different music indeed from the other, which is deep and plaintive, and goes to the heart."

"But do you not see how the words have been altered? In the song you first heard me singing, the fisherman goes again to the spot, again and again sees the face in the water, again and again seeks to capture the Nereid, and never knows to the last that the face was that of the mortal on the rock close behind him, and which he passed by without notice every day. Deluded by an ideal image, the real one escapes from his eye."

"Is the verse that is recast meant to symbolize a moral in love?"

"In love? nay, I know not; but in life, yes —at least the life of the artist."

"The paraphrase of the original is yours, Signorina—words and music both. Am I not right? Your silence answers 'Yes.' Will you pardon me if I say that, though there can be no doubt of the new beauty you have given to the old song, I think that the moral of the old was the sounder one, the truer to human life. We do not go on to the last duped by an illusion. If enamoured by the shadow on the waters, still we do look around us and discover the image it reflects."

Isaura shook her head gently, but made no answer. On the table before her there were a few myrtle-sprigs and one or two buds from the last winter rose, which she had been arranging into a simple nosegay; she took up these, and abstractedly began to pluck and scatter the rose-leaves.

"Despise the coming May flowers if you will, they will soon be so plentiful," said Graham; "but do not cast away the few blossoms which winter has so kindly spared, and which even summer will not give again." And, placing his hand on the winter buds, it touched hers—lightly, indeed, but she felt the touch, shrank from it, colored, and rose from her seat.

"The sun has left this side of the garden, the east wind is rising, and you must find it chilly here," she said in an altered tone; "will you not come into the house?"

"It is not the air that I feel chilly," said Graham, with a half-smile; "I almost fear that my prosaic admonitions have displeased you."

"They were not prosaic; and they were kind and very wise," she added, with her exquisite laugh—laugh so wonderfully sweet and musical. She now had gained the entrance of the arbor; Graham joined her, and they walked towards the house. He asked her if she had seen much of the Savarins since they had met.

"Once or twice we have been there of an evening."

"And encountered, no doubt, the illustrious young minstrel who despises Tasso and Corneille?"

"M. Rameau? Oh, yes; he is constantly at the Savarins. Do not be severe on him. He is unhappy—he is struggling—he is soured. An artist has thorns in his path which lookers-on do not heed."

"All people have thorns in their path, and I have no great respect for those who want lookers-on to heed them whenever they are scratched. But M. Rameau seems to me one of those writers very common now-a-days, in France and even in England; writers who have never read anything worth studying, and are, of course, presumptuous in proportion to their ignorance. I should not have thought an artist like yourself could have recognized an artist in a M. Rameau who despises Tasso without knowing Italian."

Graham spoke bitterly; he was once more jealous.

"Are you not an artist yourself? Are you not a writer? M. Savarin told me you were a distinguished man of letters."

"M. Savarin flatters me too much. I am not an artist, and I have a great dislike to that word as it is now hackneyed and vulgarized in England and in France. A cook calls himself

an artist; a tailor does the same; a man writes a gaudy melodrame, a spasmodic song, a sensational novel, and straightway he calls himself an artist, and indulges in a pedantic jargon about 'essence' and 'form,' assuring us that a poet we can understand wants essence, and a poet we can scan wants form. Thank heaven, I am not vain enough to call myself artist. I have written some very dry lucubrations in periodicals, chiefly political, or critical upon other subjects than art. But why, *à propos* of M. Rameau, did you ask me that question respecting myself?"

"Because much in your conversation," answered Isaura, in rather a mournful tone, "made me suppose you had more sympathies with art and its cultivators than you cared to avow. And if you had such sympathies, you would comprehend what a relief it is to a poor aspirant to art like myself to come into communication with those who devote themselves to any art distinct from the common pursuits of the world; what a relief it is to escape from the ordinary talk of society. There is a sort of instinctive freemasonry among us, including masters and disciples, and one art has a fellowship with other arts; mine is but song and music, yet I feel attracted towards a sculptor, a painter, a romance-writer, a poet, as much as towards a singer, a musician. Do you understand why I cannot contemn M. Rameau as you do? I differ from his tastes in literature; I do not much admire such of his writings as I have read; I grant that he overestimates his own genius, whatever that be,—yet I like to converse with him: he is a struggler upward, though with weak wings, or with erring footsteps, like myself."

"Mademoiselle," said Graham, earnestly, "I cannot say how I thank you for this candor. Do not condemn me for abusing it—if ——" he paused.

"If what?"

"If I, so much older than yourself—I do not say only in years, but in the experience of life—I whose lot is cast among those busy and 'positive' pursuits, which necessarily quicken that unromantic faculty called common-sense—if, I say, the deep interest with which you must inspire all whom you admit into an acquaintance, even as unfamiliar as that now between us, makes me utter one caution, such as might be uttered by a friend or brother. Beware of those artistic sympathies which you so touchingly confess; beware how, in the great events of life, you allow fancy to misguide your reason. In choosing friends on whom to rely, separate the artist from the human being. Judge of the human being for what it is in itself. Do not worship the face on the waters, blind to the image on the rock. In one word, never see in an artist like a M. Rameau the human being to whom you could intrust the destinies of your life. Pardon me, pardon me; we may meet little hereafter, but you are a creature so utterly new to me, so wholly unlike any woman I have ever before encountered and admired, and to me seem endowed with such wealth of mind and soul, exposed to such hazard, that—that ——" again he paused, and his voice trembled as he concluded—"that it would be a deep sorrow to me if, perhaps years hence, I should have to say, 'Alas! by what mistake has that wealth been wasted!'"

While they had thus conversed, mechanically they had turned away from the house, and were again standing before the arbor.

Graham, absorbed in the passion of his adjuration, had not till now looked into the face of the companion, by his side. Now, when he had concluded, and heard no reply, he bent down and saw that Isaura was weeping silently.

His heart smote him.

"Forgive me," he exclaimed, drawing her hand into his: "I have had no right to talk thus; but it was not from want of respect; it was—it was——"

The hand which was yielded to his pressed it gently, timidly, chastely.

"Forgive!" murmured Isaura; "do you think that I, an orphan, have never longed for a friend who would speak to me thus?" And so saying, she lifted her eyes, streaming still, to his bended countenance—eyes, despite their tears, so clear in their innocent limpid beauty, so ingenuous, so frank, so virgin-like, so unlike the eyes of "any other woman he had encountered and admired."

"Alas!" he said, in quick and hurried accents, "you may remember, when we have before conversed, how I, though so uncultured in your art, still recognized its beautiful influence upon human breasts; how I sought to combat your own depreciation of its rank

among the elevating agencies of humanity; how, too, I said that no man could venture to ask you to renounce the boards, the lamps—resign the fame of actress, of singer. Well, now that you accord to me the title of friend, now that you so touchingly remind me that you are an orphan—thinking of all the perils the young and the beautiful of your sex must encounter when they abandon private life for public—I think that a true friend might put the question, 'Can you resign the fame of actress, of singer?'"

"I will answer you frankly. The profession which once seemed to me so alluring began to lose its charms in my eyes some months ago. It was your words, very eloquently expressed, on the ennobling effects of music and song upon a popular audience, that counteracted the growing distaste to rendering up my whole life to the vocation of the stage. But now I think I should feel grateful to the friend whose advice interpreted the voice of my own heart, and bade me relinquish the career of actress."

Graham's face grew radiant. But whatever might have been his reply was arrested; voices and footsteps were heard behind. He turned round and saw the Venosta, the Savarins, and Gustave Rameau.

Isaura heard and saw also, started in a sort of alarmed confusion, and then instinctively retreated towards the arbor.

Graham hurried on to meet the Signora and the visitors, giving time to Isaura to compose herself by arresting them in the pathway with conventional salutations.

A few minutes later Isaura joined them, and there was talk to which Graham scarcely listened, though he shared in it by abstracted monosyllables. He declined going into the house, and took leave at the gate. In parting, his eyes fixed themselves on Isaura. Gustave Rameau was by her side. That nosegay which had been left in the arbor was in her hand; and though she was bending over it, she did not now pluck and scatter the rose-leaves. Graham at that moment felt no jealousy of the fair-faced young poet beside her.

As he walked slowly back, he muttered to himself, "But am I yet in the position to hold myself wholly free? Am I, am I? Were the sole choice before me that between her and ambition and wealth, how soon it would be made! Ambition has no prize equal to the heart of such a woman: wealth no sources of joy equal to the treasures of her love."

CHAPTER III.

From Isaura Cicogna to Madame de Grantmesnil.

THE day after I posted my last, Mr. Vane called on us. I was in our little garden at the time. Our conversation was brief, and soon interrupted by visitors—the Savarins and M. Rameau. I long for your answer. I wonder how he impressed you, if you have met him; how he would impress, if you met him now. To me he is so different from all others; and I scarcely know why his words ring in my ears, and his image rests in my thoughts. It is strange altogether; for though he is young, he speaks to me as if he were so much older than I—so kindly, so tenderly, yet as if I were a child, and much as the dear *Maestro* might do, if he thought I needed caution or counsel. Do not fancy, Eulalie, that there is any danger of my deceiving myself as to the nature of such interest as he may take in me. Oh no! There is a gulf between us there which he does not lose sight of, and which we could not pass. How, indeed, I could interest him at all I cannot guess. A rich, high-born Englishman, intent on political life; practical, prosaic—no, not prosaic; but still with the kind of sense which does not admit into its range of vision that world of dreams which is familiar as their daily home to Romance and to Art. It has always seemed to me that for love, love such I conceive it, there must be a deep and constant sympathy between two persons—not, indeed, in the usual and ordinary trifles of tastes and sentiment, but in those essentials which form the root of character, and branch out in all the leaves and blooms that expand to the sunshine and shrink from the cold,—that the worldling should wed the worldling, the artist the artist. Can the realist and the idealist blend together, and hold together till death and beyond death? If not, can there be true love between them? By true love, I mean the love which interpenetrates the soul, and once given can never die. Oh, Eulalie—answer me—answer!

P.S.—I have now fully made up my mind to renounce all thought of the stage.

From Madame de Grantmesnil to Isaura Cicogna.

MY DEAR CHILD,—How your mind has grown since you left me, the sanguine and aspiring votary of an art which, of all arts, brings the most immediate reward to a successful cultivator, and is in itself so divine in its immediate effects upon human souls! Who shall say what may be the after-results of those effects which the waiters on posterity presume to despise because they *are* immediate? A dull man, to whose mind a ray of that vague star-light undetected in the atmosphere of workday life has never yet travelled; to whom the philosopher, the preacher, the poet appeal in vain—nay, to whom the conceptions of the grandest master of instrumental music are incomprehensible; to whom Beethoven unlocks no portal in heaven; to whom Rossini has no mysteries on earth unsolved by the

critics of the pit,—suddenly hears the human voice of the human singer, and at the sound of that voice the walls which enclosed him fall. The something far from and beyond the routine of his commonplace existence becomes known to him. He of himself, poor man, can make nothing of it. He cannot put it down on paper, and say the next morning, "I am an inch nearer to heaven than I was last night;" but the feeling that he *is* an inch nearer to heaven abides with him. Unconsciously he is gentler, he is less earthly, and, in being nearer to heaven, he is stronger for earth. You singers do not seem to me to understand that you have—to use your own word, so much in vogue that it has become abused and trite—*a mission!* When you talk of missions, from whom comes the mission? Not from men. If there be a mission from man to men, it must be appointed from on high.

Think of all this; and in being faithful to your art, be true to yourself. If you feel divided between that art and the heart of the writer, and acknowledge the first to be too exacting to admit a rival, keep to that in which you are sure to excel. Alas, my fair child! do not imagine that we writers feel a happiness in our pursuits and aims more complete than that which you can command. If we care for fame (and, to be frank, we all do), that fame does not come up before us face to face—a real, visible, palpable form, as it does to the singer, to the actress. I grant that it may be more enduring, but an endurance on the length of which we dare not reckon. A writer cannot be sure of immortality till his language itself be dead; and then he has but a share in an uncertain lottery. Nothing but fragments remains of the Phrynichus, who rivalled Æschylus; of the Agathon, who perhaps excelled Euripides; of the Alcæus, in whom Horace acknowledged a master and a model; their renown is not in their works, it is but in their names. And, after all, the names of singers and actors last perhaps as long. Greece retains the name of Polus, Rome of Roscius, England of Garrick, France of Talma, Italy of Pasta, more lastingly than posterity is likely to retain mine. You address to me a question which I have often put to myself—"What is the distinction between the writer and the reader, when the reader says, 'These are *my* thoughts, these are *my* feelings; the writer has stolen them, and clothed them in his own words?'" And the more the reader says this, the more wide is the audience, the more genuine the renown, and, paradox though it seems, the more consummate the originality of the writer. But no, it is not the mere gift of expression, it is not the mere craft of the pen, it is not the mere taste in arrangement of word and cadence, which thus enables the one to interpret the mind, the heart, the soul of the many. It is a power breathed into him as he lay in his cradle, and a power that gathered around itself, as he grew up, all the influences he acquired, whether from observation of external nature, or from study of men and books, or from that experience of daily life which varies with every human being. No education could make two intellects exactly alike, as no culture can make two leaves exactly alike. How truly you describe the sense of dissatisfaction which every writer of superior genius communicates to his admirers! how truly do you feel that the greater is the dissatisfaction in proportion to the writer's genius, and the admirer's conception of it! But that is the mystery which makes—let me borrow a German phrase—the *cloudland* between the finite and the infinite. The greatest philosopher, intent on the secrets of Nature, feels that dissatisfaction in Nature herself. The finite cannot reduce into logic and criticism the infinite.

Let us dismiss these matters, which perplex the reason, and approach that which touches the heart—which in your case, my child, touches the heart of woman. You speak of love, and deem that the love which lasts—the household, the conjugal love—should be based upon such sympathies of pursuit that the artist should wed with the artist.

This is one of the questions you do well to address to me; for whether from my own experience, or from that which I have gained from observation extended over a wide range of life, and quickened and intensified by the class of writing that I cultivate, and which necessitates a calm study of the passions, I am an authority on such subjects, better than most women can be. And alas, my child! I come to this result: there is no prescribing to men or to women whom to select, whom to refuse, I cannot refute the axiom of the ancient poet, "In love there is no wherefore." But there is a time—it is but often a moment of time—in which love is not yet a master, in which we can say, "I *will* love—I will *not* love."

Now, if I could find you in such a moment, I would say to you, "Artist, do not love—do not marry—an artist." Two artistic natures rarely combine. The artistic nature is wonderfully exacting. I fear it is supremely egotistical—so jealously sensitive that it writhes at the touch of a rival. Racine was the happiest of husbands; his wife adored his genius, but could not understand his plays. Would Racine have been happy if he had married a Corneille in petticoats? I who speak have loved an artist, certainly equal to myself. I am sure that he loved me. That sympathy in pursuits of which you speak drew us together, and became very soon the cause of antipathy. To both of us the endeavor to coalesce was misery.

I don't know your M. Rameau. Savarin has sent me some of his writings; from these I judge that his only chance of happiness would be to marry a commonplace woman, with *separation de biens*. He is, believe me, but one of the many, with whom New Paris abounds, who, because they have the infirmities of genius, imagine they have its strength.

I come next to the Englishman. I see how serious is your questioning about him. You not only regard him as a being distinct from the crowd of a *salon;* he stands equally apart in the chamber of your thoughts—you do not mention him in the same letter as that which treats of Rameau and Savarin. He has become already an image not to be lightly mixed up with others. You would rather not have mentioned him at all to me, but could not resist it. The interest you feel in him so perplexed you that in a kind of feverish impatience you cry out to me, "Can you solve the riddle? Did you ever know well Englishmen? Can an Englishman be understood out of his island?" etc. etc. Yes, I have known well many Englishmen. In affairs of the heart they are much like all other men. No; I do not know this Englishman in particular, nor any one of his name.

Well, my child, let us frankly grant that this foreigner has gained some hold on your thoughts, on your fancy, perhaps also on your heart. Do not fear that he will love you less enduringly, or that you will become alienated from him, because he is not an artist. If he be a strong nature, and with some great purpose in life, your ambition will fuse itself in his; and knowing you as I do, I believe you would make

an excellent wife to an Englishman whom you honored as well as loved; and sorry though I should be that you relinquished the singer's fame, I should be consoled in thinking you safe in the woman's best sphere—a contented home, safe from calumny, safe from gossip. I never had that home; and there has been no part in my author's life in which I would not have given all the celebrity it won for the obscure commonplace of such woman lot. Could I move human beings as pawns on a chess-board, I should indeed say that the most suitable and congenial mate for you, for a woman of sentiment and genius, would be a well-born and well-educated German; for such a German unites, with domestic habits and a strong sense of family ties, a romance of sentiment, a love of art, a predisposition towards the poetic side of life which is very rare among Englishmen of the same class. But as the German is not forthcoming, I give my vote for the Englishman, provided only you love him. Ah, child, be sure of that. Do not mistake fancy for love. All women do not require love in marriage, but without it that which is best and highest in *you* would wither and die. Write to me often and tell me all. M. Savarin is right. My book is no longer my companion. It is gone from me, and I am once more alone in the world.—Yours affectionately.

P.S.—Is not your postscript a woman's? Does it not require a woman's postscript in reply? You say in yours that you have fully made up your mind to renounce all thoughts of the stage. I ask in mine, "What has the Englishman to do with that determination?"

CHAPTER IV.

Some weeks have passed since Graham's talk with Isaura in the garden; he has not visited the villa since. His cousins the D'Altons have passed through Paris on their way to Italy, meaning to stay a few days; they stayed nearly a month, and monopolized much of Graham's companionship. Both these were reasons why, in the habitual society of the Duke, Graham's persuasion that he was not yet free to court the hand of Isaura became strengthened, and with that persuasion necessarily came a question equally addressed to his conscience. "If not yet free to court her hand, am I free to expose myself to the temptation of seeking to win her affection?" But when his cousin was gone his heart began to assert its own rights, to argue its own case, and suggest modes of reconciling its dictates to the obligations which seemed to oppose them. In this hesitating state of mind he received the following note:—

Villa ——, Lac d'Enghien.

My dear Mr. Vane,—We have retreated from Paris to the banks of this beautiful little lake. Come and help to save Frank and myself from quarrelling with each other, which, until the Rights of Women are firmly established, married folks always will do when left to themselves, especially if they are still lovers, as Frank and I are. Love is a terribly quarrelsome thing. Make us a present of a few days out of your wealth of time. We will visit Montmorency and the haunts of Rousseau—sail on the lake at moonlight—dine at gipsy *restaurants* under trees not yet embrowned by summer heats—discuss literature and politics—'Shakespeare and the musical glasses'—and be as sociable and pleasant as Boccaccio's tale-tellers at Fiesole. We shall be but a small party, only the Savarins, that unconscious sage and humorist Signora Venosta, and that dimple-cheeked Isaura, who embodies the song of nightingales and the smile of summer. Refuse, and Frank shall not have an easy moment till he sends in his claims for 30 millions against the Alabama.—Yours, as you behave,

Lizzie Morley.

Graham did not refuse. He went to Enghein for four days and a quarter. He was under the same roof as Isaura. O those happy days!—so happy that they defy description. But though to Graham the happiest days he had ever known, they were happier still to Isaura. There were drawbacks to his happiness, none to hers,—drawbacks partly from reasons the weight of which the reader will estimate later; partly from reasons the reader may at once comprehend and assess. In the sunshine of her joy, all the vivid colorings of Isaura's artistic temperament came forth, so that what I may call the homely, domestic woman-side of her nature faded into shadow. If, my dear reader, whether you be man or woman, you have come into familiar contact with some creature of a genius to which, even assuming that you yourself have a genius in its own way, you have no special affinities,—have you not felt shy with that creature? Have you not, perhaps, felt how intensely you could love that creature, and doubted if that creature could possibly love you? Now I think that shyness and that disbelief are common with either man or woman, if, however conscious of superiority in the prose of life, he or she recognizes inferiority in the poetry of it.

And yet this self-abasement is exceedingly mistaken. The poetical kind of genius is so grandly indulgent, so inherently deferential, bows with such unaffected modesty to the superiority in which it fears it may fail (yet seldom does fail)—the superiority of common sense. And when we come to women, what

marvellous truth is conveyed by the woman who has had no superior in intellectual gifts among her own sex! Corinne, crowned at the Capitol, selects out of the whole world, as the hero of her love, no rival poet and enthusiast, but a cold-blooded, sensible Englishman.

Graham Vane, in his strong masculine form of intellect—Graham Vane, from whom I hope much, if he live to fulfil his rightful career—had, not unreasonably, the desire to dominate the life of the woman whom he selected as the partner of his own. But the life of Isaura seemed to escape him. If at moments, listening to her, he would say to himself, "What a companion!—life could never be dull with her"—at other moments he would say, "True, never dull, but would it be always safe?" And then comes in that mysterious power of love which crushes all beneath its feet, and makes us end self-commune by that abject submission of reason, which only murmurs, "Better be unhappy with the one you love, than happy with the one whom you do not." All such self-communes were unknown to Isaura. She lived in the bliss of the hour. If Graham could have read her heart, he would have dismissed all doubt whether he could dominate her life. Could a Fate or an angel have said to her, "Choose,—on one side I promise you the glories of a Catalani, a Pasta, a Sappho, a De Staël, a Georges Sand—all combined into one immortal name: or, on the other side, the whole heart of the man who would estrange himself from you if you had such combination of glories"—her answer would have brought Graham Vane to her feet: all scruples, all doubts would have vanished; he would have exclaimed, with the generosity inherent in the higher order of man, "Be glorious, if your nature wills it so. Glory enough to me that you would have resigned glory itself to become mine." But how is it that men worth a woman's loving become so diffident when they love intensely? Even in ordinary cases of love there is so ineffable a delicacy in virgin woman, that a man, be he how refined soever, feels himself rough and rude and coarse in comparison. And while that sort of delicacy was pre-eminent in this Italian orphan, there came, to increase the humility of the man so proud and so confident in himself when he had only men to deal with, the consciousness that his intellectual nature was hard and positive beside the angel-like purity and the fairy-like play of hers.

There was a strong wish on the part of Mrs. Morley to bring about the union of these two. She had a great regard and a great admiration for both. To her mind, unconscious of all Graham's doubts and prejudices, they were exactly suited to each other. A man of intellect so cultivated as Graham's, if married to a commonplace English "Miss," would surely feel as if life had no sunshine and no flowers. The love of an Isaura would steep it in sunshine, pave it with flowers. Mrs. Morley admitted—all American Republicans of gentle birth do admit—the instincts which lead "like" to match with "like," an equality of blood and race. With all her assertion of the Rights of Woman, I do not think that Mrs. Morley would ever have conceived the possibility of consenting that the richest, and prettiest, and cleverest girl in the States could become the wife of a son of hers if the girl had the taint of negro blood, even though shown nowhere save the slight distinguishing hue of her finger-nails. So, had Isaura's merits been threefold what they were, and she had been the wealthy heiress of a retail grocer, this fair Republican would have opposed (more strongly than many an English duchess, or at least a Scotch duke, would do, the wish of a son), the thought of an alliance between Graham Vane and the grocer's daughter! But Isaura was a Cicogna—an offspring of a very ancient and very noble house. Disparities of fortune, or mere worldly position, Mrs. Morley supremely despised. Here were the great parities of alliance—parities in years and good looks and mental culture So, in short, she, in the invitation given to them, had planned for the union between Isaura and Graham.

To this plan she had an antagonist, whom she did not even guess, in Madame Savarin. That lady, as much attached to Isaura as was Mrs. Morley herself, and still more desirous of seeing a girl, brilliant and parentless, transferred from the companionship of Signora Venosta to the protection of a husband, entertained no belief in the serious attentions of Graham Vane. Perhaps she exaggerated his worldly advantages—perhaps she undervalued the warmth of his affections; but it was not within the range of her experience, confined much to Parisian life, nor in harmony with

her notions of the frigidity and *morgue* of the English national character, that a rich, and high-born young man, to whom a great career in practical public life was predicted, should form a matrimonial alliance with a foreign orphan girl who, if of gentle birth, had no useful connections, would bring no correspondent *dot*, and had been reared and intended for the profession of the stage. She much more feared that the result of any attentions on the part of such a man would be rather calculated to compromise the orphan's name, or at least to mislead her expectations, than to secure her the shelter of a wedded home. Moreover, she had cherished plans of her own for Isaura's future. Madame Savarin had conceived for Gustave Romeau a friendly regard, stronger than that which Mrs. Morley entertained for Graham Vane, for it was more motherly. Gustave had been familiarized to her sight and her thoughts since he had first been launched into the literary world under her husband's auspices; he had confided to her his mortification in his failures, his joy in his successes. His beautiful countenance, his delicate health, his very infirmities and defects, had endeared him to her womanly heart. Isaura was the wife of all others who, in Madame Savarin's opinion, was made for Rameau. Her fortune, so trivial beside the wealth of the Englishman, would be a competence to Rameau; then that competence might swell into vast riches if Isaura succeeded on the stage. She found with extreme displeasure that Isaura's mind had become estranged from the profession to which she had been destined, and divined that a deference to the Englishman's prejudices had something to do with that estrangement. It was not to be expected that a Frenchwoman, wife to a sprightly man of letters, who had intimate friends and allies in every department of the artistic world, should cherish any prejudice whatever against the exercise of an art in which success achieved riches and renown. But she was prejudiced, as most Frenchwomen are, against allowing to unmarried girls the same freedom and independence of action that are the rights of women —French women—when married. And she would have disapproved the entrance of Isaura on her professional career until she could enter it as a wife—the wife of an artist—the wife of Gustave Rameau.

Unaware of the rivalry between these friendly diplomatists and schemers, Graham and Isaura glided hourly more and more down the current, which as yet ran smooth. No words by which love is spoken were exchanged between them; in fact, though constantly together, they were very rarely, and then but for moments, alone with each other. Mrs. Morley artfully schemed more than once to give them such opportunities for that mutual explanation of heart which, she saw, had not yet taken place: with art more practised and more watchful, Madame Savarin contrived to baffle her hostess's intention. But, indeed, neither Graham nor Isaura sought to make opportunities for themselves. He, as we know, did not deem himself wholly justified in uttering the words of love by which a man of honor binds himself for life; and she!—what girl, pure-hearted and loving truly, does not shrink from seeking the opportunities which it is for the man to court?—Yet Isaura needed no words to tell her that she was loved—no, nor even a pressure of the hand, a glance of the eye; she felt it instinctively, mysteriously, by the glow of her own being in the presence of her lover. She knew that she herself could not so love unless she were beloved.

Here woman's wit is keener and truthfuller than man's. Graham, as I have said, did not feel confident that he had reached the heart of Isaura: he was conscious that he had engaged her interest, that he had attracted her fancy; but, often, when charmed by the joyous play of her imagination, he would sigh to himself, "To natures so gifted what single mortal can be the all in all?"

They spent the summer mornings in excursions round the beautiful neighborhood, dined early, and sailed on the calm lake at moonlight. Their talk was such as might be expected from lovers of books in summer holidays. Savarin was a critic by profession; Graham Vane, if not that, at least owed such literary reputation as he had yet gained to essays in which the rare critical faculty was conspicuously developed.

It was pleasant to hear the clash of these two minds encountering each other; they differed perhaps less in opinions that in the mode by which opinions are discussed. The Englishman's range of reading was wider than the Frenchman's and his scholarship more accurate,

but the Frenchman had a compact neatness of expression, a light and nimble grace, whether in the advancing or the retreat of his argument, which covered deficiencies, and often made them appear like merits. Graham was compelled, indeed, to relinquish many of the forces of superior knowledge or graver eloquence, which, with less lively antagonists, he could have brought into the field, for the witty sarcasm of Savarin would have turned them aside as pedantry or declamation. But though Graham was neither dry nor diffuse, and the happiness at his heart brought out the gaiety of humor which had been his early characteristic, and yet rendered his familiar intercourse genial and playful,—still there was this distinction between his humor and Savarin's wit, that in the first there was always something earnest, in the last always something mocking. And in criticism Graham seemed ever anxious to bring out a latent beauty, even in writers comparatively neglected. Savarin was acutest when dragging forth a blemish never before discovered in writers universally read.

Graham did not perhaps notice the profound attention with which Isaura listened to him in these intellectual skirmishes with the more glittering Parisian. There was this distinction she made between him and Savarin: when the last spoke she often chimed in with some happy sentiment of her own; but she never interrupted Graham — never intimated a dissent from his theories of art, or the deductions he drew from them; and she would remain silent and thoughful for some minutes when his voice ceased. There was passing from his mind into hers an ambition which she imagined, poor girl, that he would be pleased to think he had inspired, and which might become a new bond of sympathy between them. But as yet the ambition was vague and timid—an idea or a dream to be fulfilled in some indefinite future.

The last night of this short-lived holiday-time, the party, after staying out on the lake to a later hour than usual, stood lingering still on the lawn of the villa; and their host, who was rather addicted to superficial studies of the positive sciences, including, of course, the most popular of all, astronomy, kept his guests politely listening to speculative conjectures on the probable size of the inhabitants of Sirius —that very distant and very gigantic inhabitant of heaven who has led philosophers into mortifying reflections upon the utter insignificance of our own poor little planet, capable of producing nothing greater than Shakespeares and Newtons, Aristotles and Cæsars—manikins, no doubt, beside intellects proportioned to the size of the world in which they flourish.

As it chanced, Isaura and Graham were then standing close to each other and a little apart from the rest. "It is very strange," said Graham, laughing low, "how little I care about Sirius. He is the sun of some other system, and is perhaps not habitable at all, except by salamanders. He cannot be one of the stars with which I have established familiar acquaintance, associated with fancies and dreams and hopes, as most of us do, for instance, with Hesperus, the moon's harbinger and comrade. But amid all those stars there is one—not Hesperus—which has always had, from my childhood, a mysterious fascination for me. Knowing as little of astrology as I do of astronomy, when I gaze upon that star I become credulously superstitious, and fancy it has an influence on my life. Have you, too, any favorite star?"

"Yes," said Isaura; "and I distinguish it now, but I do not even know its name, and never would ask it."

"So like me. I would not vulgarize my unknown source of beautiful illusions by giving it the name it takes in technical catalogues. For fear of learning that name I never have pointed it out to any one before. I too at this moment distinguish it apart from all its brotherhood. Tell me which is yours."

Isaura pointed and explained. The Englishman was startled. By what strange coincidence could they both have singled out from all the host of heaven the same favorite star?

"*Cher* Vane," cried Savarin, "Colonel Morley declares that what America is to the terrestrial system Sirius is to the heavenly. America is to extinguish Europe, and then Sirius is to extinguish the world."

"Not for some millions of years; time to look about us," said the Colonel, gravely. "But I certainly differ from those who maintain that Sirius recedes from us. I say that he appproaches. The principles of a body so enlightened must be those of progress." Then addressing Graham in English, he added, "there will be a mulling in this fogified planet some day, I predicate. Sirius is a *keener!*"

"I have not imagination lively enough to interest myself in the destinies of Sirius in connection with our planet at a date so remote," said Graham, smiling. Then he added in a whisper to Isaura, "My imagination does not carry me farther than to wonder whether this day twelvemonth—the 8th of July—we two shall both be singling out that same star, and gazing on it as now, side by side."

This was the sole utterance of that sentiment in which the romance of love is so rich that the Englishman addressed to Isaura during those memorable summer days at Enghien.

CHAPTER V.

The next morning the party broke up. Letters had been delivered both to Savarin and to Graham, which, even had the day for departure not been fixed, would have summoned them away. On reading his letter, Savarin's brow became clouded. He made a sign to his wife after breakfast, and wandered away with her down an ally in the little garden. His trouble was of that nature which a wife either soothes or aggravates, according sometimes to her habitual frame of mind, sometimes to the mood of temper in which she may chance to be;—a household trouble, a pecuniary trouble.

Savarin was by no means an extravagant man. His mode of living, though elegant and hospitable, was modest compared to that of many French authors inferior to himself in the fame which at Paris brings a very good return in francs. But his station itself as the head of a powerful literary clique necessitated many expenses which were too congenial to his extreme good-nature to be regulated by strict prudence. His hand was always open to distressed writers and struggling artists, and his sole income was derived from his pen and a journal in which he was chief editor and formerly sole proprietor. But that journal had of late not prospered. He had sold or pledged a considerable share in the proprietorship. He had been compelled also to borrow a sum large for him, and the debt obtained from a retired *bourgeois* who lent out his moneys, "by way," he said, "of maintaining an excitement and interest in life," would in a few days become due. The letter was not from that creditor, but it was from his publisher, containing a very disagreeable statement of accounts, pressing for settlement, and declining an offer of Savarin's for a new book (not yet begun) except upon terms that the author valued himself too highly to accept. Altogether, the situation was unpleasant. There were many times in which Madame Savarin presumed to scold her distinguished husband for his want of prudence and thrift. But those were never the times when scolding could be of no use. It would clearly be of no use now. Now was the moment to cheer and encourage him, to reassure him as to his own undiminished powers and popularity, for he talked dejectedly of himself as obsolete and passing out of fashion; to convince him also of the impossibility that the ungrateful publisher whom Savarin's more brilliant successes had enriched could encounter the odium of hostile proceedings; and to remind him of all the authors, all the artists, whom he, in their earlier difficulties, had so liberally assisted, and from whom a sum sufficing to pay off the *bourgeois* creditor when the day arrived could now be honorably asked and would be readily contributed. In this last suggestion the homely prudent good sense of Madame Savarin failed her. She did not comprehend that delicate pride of honor which, with all his Parisian frivolities and cynicism, dignified the Parisian man of genius. Savarin could not, to save his neck from a rope, have sent round the begging-hat to friends whom he had obliged. Madame Savarin was one of those women with large-lobed ears, who can be wonderfully affectionate, wonderfully sensible, admirable wives and mothers, and yet are deficient in artistic sympathies with artistic natures. Still, a really good honest wife is such an incalculable blessing to her lord, that, at the end of the talk in the solitary *allée*, this man of exquisite *finesse*, of the undefinably high-bred temperament, and, alas! the painfully morbid susceptibility, which belong to the genuine artistic character, emerged into the open sunlit lawn with his crest uplifted, his lip curved upward in its joyous mockery, and perfectly persuaded that some how or other he should put down the offensive publisher, and pay off the unoffending creditor when the day for payment came.

Still he had judgment enough to know that to do this he must get back to Paris, and could not dwadle away precious hours in discussing the principles of poetry with Graham Vane.

There was only one thing, apart from "the begging-hat," in which Savarin dissented from his wife. She suggested his starting a new journal in conjunction with Gustave Rameau, upon whose genius and the expectations to be formed from it (here she was tacitly thinking of Isaura wedded to Rameau, and more than a Malibran on the stage) she insisted vehemently. Savarin did not thus estimate Gustave Rameau—thought him a clever promising young writer in a very bad school of writing, who might do well some day or other. But that a Rameau could help a Savarin to make a fortune! No; at that idea he opened his eyes, patted his wife's shoulder, and called her "*enfant.*

Graham's letter was from M. Renard, and ran thus:—

MONSIEUR,—I had the honor to call at your apartment this morning, and I write this line to the address given to me by your *concierge* to say that I have been fortunate enough to ascertain that the relation of the missing lady is now at Paris. I shall hold myself in readiness to attend your summons.—Deign to accept, Monsieur, the assurance of my profound consideration.

J. RENARD.

This communication sufficed to put Graham into very high spirits. Anything that promised success in his research seemed to deliver his thoughts from a burthen and his will from a fetter. Perhaps in a few days he might frankly and honorably say to Isaura words which would justify his retaining longer, and pressing more ardently, the delicate hand which trembled in his as they took leave.

On arriving at Paris, Graham despatched a note to M. Renard requesting to see him, and received a brief line in reply that M. Renard feared he should be detained on other and important business till the evening, but hoped to call at eight o'clock. A few minutes before that hour he entered Graham's apartment.

"You have discovered the uncle of Louise Duval!" exclaimed Graham; "of course you mean M. de Mauléon, and he is at Paris?"

"True so far, Monsieur; but do not be too sanguine as to the results of the information I can give you. Permit me, as briefly as possible, to state the circumstances. When you acquainted me with the fact that M. de Mauléon was the uncle of Louise Duval, I told you that I was not without hopes of finding him out, though so long absent from Paris. I will now explain why. Some months ago, one of my colleagues engaged in the political department (which I am not) was sent to Lyons, in consequence of some suspicions conceived by the loyal authorities there of a plot against the Emperor's life. The suspicions were groundless, the plot a mare's nest. But my colleague's attention was especially drawn towards a man, not mixed up with the circumstances from which a plot had been inferred, but deemed in some way or other a dangerous enemy to the Government. Ostensibly, he exercised a modest and small calling as a sort of *courtier* or *agent d'affairs;* but it was noticed that certain persons familiarly frequenting his apartment, or to whose houses he used to go at night, were disaffected to the Government—not by any means of the lowest rank—some of them rich malcontents who had been devoted Orleanists; others, disappoinred aspirants to office or the "cross;" one or two well-born and opulent fanatics dreaming of another Republic. Certain very able articles in the journals of the excitable *Midi*, though bearing another signature, were composed or dictated by this man—articles evading the censure and penalties of the law, but very mischievous in their tone. All who had come into famlliar communication with this person were impressed with a sense of his powers; and also with a vague belief that he belonged to a higher class in breeding and education than that of a petty *agent d'affaires.* My colleague set himself to watch the man, and took occasions of business at his little office to enter into talk with him. Not by personal appearance, but by voice, he came to a conclusion that the man was not wholly a stranger to him; a peculiar voice with a slight Norman breath of pronunciation, though a Parisian accent, a voice very low, yet very distinct—very masculine, yet very gentle. My colleague was puzzled, till late one evening he observed the man coming out of the house of one of these rich malcontents, the rich malcontent himself accompanying him. My colleague, availing himself of the dimness of light, as the two passed into a lane which led to the agent't apartment, contrived to keep close behind and listen to their conversation. But of

this he heard nothing—only, when at the end of the lane, the rich man turned abruptly, shook his companion warmly by the hand, and parted from him, saying, 'Never fear; all shall go right with you, my dear Victor.' At the sound of that name 'Victor,' my colleague's memories, before so confused, became instantaneously clear. Previous to entering our service, he had been in the horse business—a votary of the turf; as such he had often seen the brilliant '*sportman*,' Victor de Mauléon; sometimes talked to him. Yes, that was the voice—the slight Norman intonation (Victor de Mauléon's father had it strongly, and Victor had passed some of his early childhood in Normandy), the subdued modulation of speech which had made so polite the offence to men, or so winning the courtship to women—that was Victor de Mauléon. But why there in that disguise! What was his real business and object? My *confrère* had no time allowed to him to prosecute such inquiries. Whether Victor or the rich malcontent had observed him at their heels, and feared he might have overheard their words, I know not, but the next day appeared in one of the popular journals circulating among the *ouvriers*, a paragraph stating that a Paris spy had been seen at Lyons, warning all honest men against his machinations, and containing a tolerably accurate description of his person. And that very day, on venturing forth, my estimable colleague suddenly found himself hustled by a ferocious throng, from whose hands he was with great difficulty rescued by the municipal guard. He left Lyons that night; and for recompense of his services received a sharp reprimand from his chief. He had committed the worst offence in our profession, *trop de zèle*. Having only heard the outlines of this story from another, I repaired to my *confrère* after my last interview with Monsieur, and learned what I now tell you from his own lips. As he was not in my branch of the service, I could not order him to return to Lyons; and I doubt whether his chief would have allowed it. But I went to Lyons myself, and there ascertained that our supposed Vicomte had left that town for Paris some months ago, not long after the adventure of my colleague. The man bore a very good character generally—was said to be very honest and inoffensive; and the notice taken of him by persons of higher rank was attributed generally to a respect for his talents, and not on account of any sympathy in political opinions. I found that the *confrère* mentioned, and who alone could identify M. de Mauélton in the disguise which the Vicomte had assumed, was absent on one of those missions abroad in which he is chiefly employed. I had to wait for his return, and it was only the day before yesterday that I obtained the following particulars:—M. de Mauléon bears the same name as he did at Lyons—that name is Jean Lebeau; he exercises the ostensible profession of a 'letter-writer,' and a sort of adviser on business among the workmen and petty *bourgeoisie*, and he nightly frequents the *Café Jean Jacques, Rue ——, Faubourg Montmartre*. It is not yet quite half-past eight, and no doubt you could see him at the *café* this very night, if you thought proper to go."

"Excellent! I will go! Describe him!"

"Alas! that is exactly what I cannot do at present. Far after hearing what I now tell you, I put the same request you do to my colleague, when, before he could answer me, he was summoned to the *bureau* of his chief promising to return and give me the requisite description. He did not return. And I find that he was compelled, on quitting his chief, to seize the first train starting for Lille upon an important political investigation which brooked no delay. He will be back in a few days, and then Monsieur shall have the description."

"Nay; I think I will seize time by the forelock, and try my chance to-night. If the man be really a conspirator, and it looks likely enough, who knows but what he may see quick reason to take alarm and vanish from Paris at any hour? *Café Jean Jacques, Rue ——*. I will go. Stay; you have seen Victor de Mauléon in his youth: what was he like then?"

"Tall — slender — but broad-shouldered — very erect—carrying his head high—a profusion of dark curls—a small black moustache —fair clear complexlon—light-colored eyes with dark lashes—*fort bel homme*. But he will not look like that now."

"His present age?"

'Forty-seven or forty-eight. But before you go, I must beg you to consider well what you are about. It is evident that M. de Mauléon has some strong reason, whatever it be,

for merging his identity in that of Jean Lebeau. I presume, therefore, that you could scarcely go up to M. Lebeau, when you have discovered him, and say, 'Pray, M. le Vicomte, can you give me some tidings of your neice, Louise Duval?' If you thus accosted him, you might bring some danger on yourself, but you would certainly gain no information from him."

"True."

"On the other hand, if you make his acquaintance as M. Lebeau, how can you assume him to know anything about Louise Duval?"

"*Parbleu!* M. Renard, you try to toss me aside on both horns of the dilemma; but it seems to me that, if I once make his acquaintance as M. Lebeau, I might gradually and cautiously feel my way as to the best mode of putting the question to which I seek reply. I suppose, too, that the man must be in very poor circumstances to adopt so humble a calling, and that a small sum of money may smooth all difficulties."

"I am not so sure of that," said M. Renard, thoughtfully; "but grant that money may do so, and grant also that the Vicomte, being a needy man, has become a very unscrupulous one,—is there anything in your motives for discovering Louise Duval which might occasion you trouble and annoyance, if it were divined by a needy and unscrupulous man?—anything which might give him a power of threat or exaction? Mind, I am not asking you to tell me any secret you have reasons for concealing, but I suggest that it might be prudent if you did not let M. Lebeau know your real name and rank—if, in short, you could follow his example, and adopt a disguise. But no; when I think of it, you would doubtless be so unpractised in the art of disguise, that he would detect you at once to be other than you seem; and if suspecting you of spying into his secrets, and if those secrets be really of a political nature, your very life might not be safe."

"Thank you for your hint—the disguise is an excellent idea, and combines amusement with precaution. That this Victor de Mauléon must be a very unprincipled and dangerous man is, I think, abundantly clear. Granting that he was innocent of all design of robbery in the affair of the jewels, still, the offence which he did own—that of admitting himself at night by a false key into the rooms of a wife whom he sought to surprise or terrify into dishonor—was a villainous action; and his present course of life is sufficiently mysterious to warrant the most unfavorable supposition. Besides, there is another motive for concealing my name from him: you say that he once had a duel with a Vane, who was very probably my father, and I have no wish to expose myself to the chance of his turning up in London some day, and seeking to renew there the acquaintance that I had courted at Paris. As for my skill in playing any part I may assume, do not fear; I am no novice in that. In my younger days I was thought clever in private theatricals, especially in the transformations of appearance which belong to light comedy and farce. Wait a few minutes, and you shall see."

Graham then retreated into his bedroom, and in a few minutes reappeared, so changed that Renard at first glance took him for a stranger. He had doffed his dress—which habitually when in captials, was characterized by the quiet, indefinable elegance that to a man of the great world, high-bred and young, seems "to the manner born"—for one of those coarse suits which Englishmen are wont to wear in their travels, and by which they are represented in French or German caricatures, —loose jacket of tweed, — with redundant pockets, waistcoat to match, short dust-colored trousers. He had combed his hair straight over his forehead, which, as I have said somewhere before, appeared in itself to alter the character of his countenance, and, without any resort to paints or cosmetics, had somehow or other given to the expression of his face an impudent, low-bred expression, with a glass screwed to his right eye—such a look as a cockney journeyman, wishing to pass for a "swell" about town, may cast on a servant-maid in the pit of a suburban theatre.

"Will it do, old fellow?" he exclaimed, in a rollicking, swaggering tone of voice, speaking French with a villanous British accent.

"Perfectly," said Renard, laughing. "I offer my compliments, and if ever you are ruined, Monsieur, I will promise you a place in our police. Only one caution,—take care not to overdo your part."

"Right. A quarter to nine—I'm off."

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CHAPTER VI.

THERE is generally a brisk exhilaration of spirits in the return to any special amusement or light accomplishment, associated with the pleasant memories of earlier youth; and remarkably so, I believe, when the amusement or accomplishment has been that of the amateur stage-player. Certainly I have known persons of very grave pursuits, of very dignified character and position, who seem to regain the vivacity of boyhood when disguising look and voice for a part in some drawing-room comedy or charade. I might name statesmen of solemn repute rejoicing to raise and to join in a laugh at their expense in such travesty of their habitual selves.

The reader must not therefore be surprised, nor, I trust, deem it inconsistant with the more serious attributes of Graham's character, if the Englishman felt the sort of joyous excitement I describe, as, in his way to the *Café Jean Jacques*, he meditated the *rôle* he had undertaken; and the joyousness was heightened beyond the mere holiday sense of humoristic pleasantry by the sanguine hope that much to effect his lasting happiness might result from the success of the object for which his disguise was assumed.

It was just twenty minutes past nine when he arrived at the *Café Jean Jacques*. He dismissed the *fiacre* and entered. The apartment devoted to customers comprised two large rooms. The first was the *café* properly speaking; the second, opening on it, was the billiard-room. Conjecturing that he should probably find the person of whom he was in quest employed at the billiard-table, Graham passed thither at once. A tall man, who might be seven-and-forty, with a long black beard, slightly grizzled, was at play with a young man of perhaps twenty-eight, who gave him odds—as better players of twenty-eight ought to give the odds to a player, though originally of equal force. whose eye is not so quick, whose hand is not so steady, as they were twenty years ago. Said Graham to himself, "The bearded man is my Vicomte." He called for a cup of coffee, and seated himself on a bench at the end of the room.

The bearded man was far behind in the game. It was his turn to play; the balls were placed in the most awkward position for him. Graham himself was a fair billiard player, both in the English and the French game. He said to himself," "No man who can make a cannon there should accept odds." The bearded man made a cannon; the bearded man continued to make cannons; the bearded man did not stop till he had won the game. The gallery of spectators was enthusiastic. Taking care to speak in very bad, very English, French, Graham expressed to one of the enthusiasts seated beside him his admiration of the bearded man's playing, and ventured to ask if the bearded man were a professional or an amateur player.

"Monsieur," replied the enthusiast, taking, a short cutty-pipe from his mouth, "it is an amateur, who has been a great player in his day, and is so proud that he always takes less odds than he ought of a younger man. It is not once in a month that he comes out as he has done to-night; but to-night he has steadied his hand. He has had six *petit verres*."

"Ah, indeed! Do you know his name?"

"I should think so: he buried my father, my two aunts, and my wife."

"Buried?" said Graham, more and more British in his accent; "I don't understand."

"Monsieur, you are English."

"I confess it."

"And a stranger to the Faubourg Montmartre."

"True."

"Or you would have heard of M. Giraud, the liveliest member of the State Company for conductiug funerals. They are going to play *La Poule*."

Much disconcerted, Graham retreated into the *café*, and seated himself haphazard at one of the small tables. Glancing round the room, he saw no one in whom he could conjecture the once brilliant Vicomte.

The company appeared to him sufficiently decent, and especially what may be called local. There were some *blouses* drinking wine, no doubt of the cheapest and thinnest; some in rough, coarse dresses, drinking beer. These were evidently English, Belgian, or German artisans. At one table, four young men, who looked like small journeymen, were playing cards. At three other tables, men older, better dressed, probably shopkeepers, were playing dominoes. Graham scrutinized these last.

but among them all could detect no one corresponding to his ideal of the Vicomte de Mauléon. "Probably," thought he, "I am too late, or perhaps he will not be here this evening. At all events, I will wait a quarter of an hour." Then the *garçon* approaching his table, he deemed it necessary to call for something, and, still in strong English accent, asked for lemonade and an evening journal. The *garçon* nodded and went his way. A monsieur at the round table next his own politely handed to him the "Galignani," saying in very good English, though unmistakably the good English of a Frenchman, "The English journal at your service."

Graham bowed his head, accepted the "Galignani," and inspected his courteous neighbor. A more respectable-looking man no Englishman could see in an English country town. He wore an unpretending flaxen wig, with limp whiskers that met at the chin, and might originally have been the same color as the wig, but were now of a pale gray—no beard, no moustache. He was dressed with the scrupulous cleanliness of a sober citizen—a high white neckcloth, with a large old-fashioned pin, containing a little knot of hair, covered with glass or crystal, and bordered with a black framework, in which were inscribed letters—evidently a mourning pin, hallowed to the memory of lost spouse or child—a man who, in England, might be the mayor of a cathedral town, at least the town-clerk. He seemed suffering from some infirmity of vision, for he wore green spectacles. The expression of his face was very mild and gentle; apparently he was about sixty years old—somewhat more.

Graham took kindly to his neighbor, insomuch that, in return for the "Galignani," he offered him a cigar, lighting one himself.

His neighbor refused politely.

"*Merci!* I never smoke—never; *mon medecin* forbids it. If I could be tempted, it would be by an English cigar. Ah, how you English beat us in all things—your ships, your iron, your *tabac*—which you do not grow!"

This speech, rendered literally as we now render it, may give the idea of a somewhat vulgar speaker. But there was something in the man's manner, in his smile, in his courtesy, which did not strike Graham as vulgar; on the contrary, he thought within himself, "How instinctive to all Frenchmen good breeding is!"

Before, however, Graham had time to explain to his amiable neighbor the politico economical principle according to which England, growing no tobacco, had tobacco much better than France, which did grow it, a rosy, middle-aged monsieur made his appearance, saying hurriedly to Graham's neighbor, "I'm afraid I'm late, but there is still a good half-hour before us if you will give me my revenge."

"Willingly, M. Georges. *Garçon*, the dominoes."

"Have you been playing at billiards?" asked M. Georges.

"Yes, two games."

"With success?"

"I won the first, and lost the second through the defect of my eyesight; the game depended on a stroke which would have been easy to an infant—I missed it."

Here the dominoes arrived, and M. Georges began shuffling them; the other turned to Graham and asked politely if he understood the game.

"A little, but not enough to comprehend why it is said to require so much skill."

"It is chiefly an affair of memory with me; but M. Georges, my opponent, has the talent of combination, which I have not."

"Nevertheless," replied M. Georges, gruffly, "you are not easily beaten; it is for you to play first, M. Lebeau"

Graham almost started. Was it possible! This mild, limp-whiskered, flaxen-wigged man, Victor de Mauléon, the Don Juan of his time; the last person in the room he should have guessed. Yet, now examining his neighbor with more attentive eye, he wondered at his stupidity in not having recognized at once the *ci-devant gentilhomme* and *beau garçon*. It happens frequently that our imagination plays us this trick; we form to ourselves an idea of some one eminent for good or for evil—a poet, a statesman, a general, a murderer, a swindler, a thief; the man is before us, and our ideas have gone into so different a groove that he does not excite a suspicion. We are told who he is, and immediately detect a thousand things that ought to have proved his identity.

Looking thus again with rectified vision at the false Lebeau, Graham observed an ele-

gance and delicacy of feature which might, in youth, have made the countenance very handsome, and rendered it still good-looking, nay, prepossessing. He now noticed, too, the slight Norman accent, its native harshness of breadth subdued into the modulated tones which bespoke the habits of polished society. Above all, as M. Lebeau moved his dominoes with one hand, not shielding his pieces with the other (as M. Georges warily did), but allowing it to rest carelessly on the table, he detected the hands of the French aristocrat; hands that had never done work — never (like those of the English noble of equal birth) been embrowned or freckled, or roughened or enlarged by early practice in athletic sports; but hands seldom seen save in the higher circles of Parisian life—partly perhaps of hereditary formation, partly owing their texture to great care begun in early youth, and continued mechanically in after life—with long taper fingers and polished nails; white and delicate as those of a woman, but not slight, not feeble; nervous and sinewy as those of a practised swordsman.

Graham watched the play, and Lebeau good-naturedly explained to him its complications as it proceeded; though the explanation, diligently attended to by M. Georges, lost Lebeau the game.

The dominoes were again shuffled, and during that operation M. Georges said, "By the way, M. Lebeau, you promised to find me a *locataire* for my second floor; have you succeeded?"

"Not yet. Perhaps you had better advertise in *Les Petites Affiches*. You ask too much for the *habitués* of this neighborhood — 100 francs a month."

"But the lodging is furnished, and well too, and has four rooms. One hundred francs are not much."

A thought flashed upon Graham—"Pardon, Monsieur," he said, "have you an *appartement de garçon* to let furnished?"

"Yes, Monsieur, a charming one. Are you in search of an apartment?"

"I have some idea of taking one, but only by the month. I am but just arrived at Paris, and I have business which may keep me here a few weeks. I do but require a bed-room and a small cabinet, and the rent must be modest. I am not a *milord*."

"I am sure we could arrange, Monsieur," said M. Georges, "though I could not well divide my *logement*. But 100 francs a-month is not much!"

"I fear it is more than I can afford: however, if you will give me your address, I will call and see the rooms,—say the day after to-morrow. Between this and then I expect letters which may more clearly decide my movements."

"If the apartments suit you," said M. Lebeau, "you will at least be in the house of a very honest man, which is more than can be said of every one who lets furnished apartments. The house, too, has a *concierge*, with a handy wife who will arrange your rooms and provide you with coffee—or tea, which you English prefer—if you breakfast at home."

Here M. Georges handed a card to Graham, and asked what hour he would call.

"About twelve, if that hour is convenient," said Graham, rising. "I presume there is a *restaurant* in the neighborhood, where I could dine reasonably."

"*Je crois bien*—half a dozen. I can recommend to you one where you can dine *en prince* for 30 sous. And if you are at Paris on business, and want any letters written in private, I can also recommend to you my friend here, M. Lebeau. Ay, and on affairs his advice is as good as a lawyer's, and his fee a *bagatelle*."

"Don't believe all that M. Georges so flatteringly says of me," put in M. Lebeau, with a modest half-smile, and in English. "I should tell you that I, like yourself, am recently arrived at Paris, having bought the business and goodwill of my predecessor in the apartment I occupy; and it is only to the respect due to his antecedents, and on the score of a few letters of recommendation which I bring from Lyons, that I can attribute the confidence shown to me, a stranger in this neighborhood. Still I have some knowledge of the world, and I am always glad if I can be of service to the English. I love the English"—he said this with a sort of melancholy earnestness which seemed sincere; and then added in a more careless tone—"I have met with much kindness from them in the course of a chequered life."

"You seem a very good fellow—in fact a regular trump, M. Lebeau," replied Graham, in the same language. "Give me your address.

o say truth, I am a very poor French scholar, s you must have seen, and am awfully bother-eaded how to manage some correspondence n matters with which I am entrusted by my mployer, so that it is a lucky chance which as brought me acquainted with you."

M. Lebeau inclined his head gracefully, and rew from a very neat morocco case a card, hich Graham took and pocketed. Then he aid for his coffee and lemonade, and returned ome, well satisfied with the evening's adven-ure.

CHAPTER VII.

THE next morning Graham sent for M. enard, and consulted with that experienced nctionary as to the details of the plan of ction which he had revolved during the hours f a sleepless night.

"In conformity with your advice," said he, not to expose myself to the chance of future nnoyance, by confiding to a man so dangerous s the false Lebeau my name and address, I ropose to take the lodging offered to me, as Ir. Lamb, an attorney's clerk, commissioned o get in certain debts, and transact other natters of business, on behalf of his employ-r's clients. I suppose there will be no diffi-ulty with the police in this change of name, ow that passports for the English are not ecessary?"

"Certainly not. You will have no trouble n that respect."

"I shall thus be enabled very naturally o improve acquaintance with the profes-onal letter-writer, and find an easy oppor-unity to introduce the name of Louis Duval. Iy chief difficulty, I fear, not being a practi-al actor, will be to keep up consistently the ueer sort of language I have adopted, both in rench and in English. I have too sharp a ritic in a man so consummate himself in stage rick and disguise as M. Lebeau, not to feel he necessity of getting through my *rôle* as uickly as I can. Meanwhile, can you recom-end me to some *magasin* where I can obtain suitable change of costume? I can't always ear a travelling suit, and I must buy linen of oarser texture than mine, and with the in-ials of my new name incribed on it."

"Quite right to study such details; I will introduce you to a *magasin* near the Temple, where you will find all you want."

"Next, have you any friends or relations in the provinces unknown to M. Lebeau, to whom I might be supposed to write about debts or business matters, and from whom I might have replies?"

"I will think over it, and manage that for you very easily. Your letters shall find their way to me, and I will dictate the answers."

After some further conversation on that business, M. Renard made an appointment to meet Graham at a *café* near the Temple later in the afternoon, and took his departure.

Graham then informed his *laquais de place* that, though he kept on his lodgings, he was going into the country for a few days, and should not want the man's services till he returned. He therefore dismissed and paid him off at once, so that the *laquais* might not observe, when he quitted his rooms the next day, that he took with him no change of clothes, etc.

CHAPTER VIII.

GRAHAM VANE had been for some days in the apartment rented of M. Georges. He takes it in the name of Mr. Lamb—a name wisely chosen, less common than Thomson and Smith, less likely to be supposed an assumed name, yet common enough not to be able easily to trace it to any special family. He appears, as he had proposed, in the character of an agent employed by a solicitor in London to execute sundry commissions, and to collect certain outstanding debts. There is no need to mention the name of the solicitor; if there were, he could give the name of his own solicitor, to whose discretion he could trust implicitly. He dresses and acts up to his assumed character with the skill of a man who, like the illustrious Charles Fox, has, though in private representations, practised the stage-play in which Demosthenes said the triple art of oratory consisted—who has seen a great deal of the world, and has that adaptability of intellect which knowledge of the world lends to one who is so thoroughly in earnest as to his end that he agrees to be sportive as to his means.

The kind of language he employs when

speaking English to Lebeau is that suited to the *rôle* of a dapper young underling of vulgar mind habituated to vulgar companionships. I feel it due, if not to Graham himself, at least to the name of the dignified orator whose name he inherits, so to modify and soften the hardy style of that peculiar diction in which he disguises his birth and disgraces his culture, that it is only here and there that I can venture to indicate the general tone of it. But in order to supply my deficiencies therein, the reader has only to call to mind the forms of phraseology which polite novelists in vogue, especially young lady novelists, ascribe to well-born gentlemen, and more emphatically to those in the higher ranks of the Peerage. No doubt Graham, in his capacity of critic, had been compelled to read, in order to review, those contributions to refined literature, and had familiarized himself to a vein of conversation abounding with "swell," and "stunner," and "awfully jolly," in its libel on manners and outrage on taste.

He has attended nightly the *Café Jean Jacques;* he has improved acquaintance with M. Georges and M. Lebeau; he has played at billiards, he has played at dominoes, with the latter. He has been much surprised at the unimpeachable honesty which M. Lebeau has exhibited in both these games. In billiards, indeed, a man cannot cheat except by disguising his strength; it is much the same in dominoes,—it is skill combined with luck, as in whist; but in whist there are modes of cheating which dominoes do not allow,—you can't mark a domino as you can a card. It was perfectly clear to Graham that M. Lebeau did not gain a livelihood by billiards or dominoes at the *Café Jean Jacques.* In the former he was not only a fair but a generous player. He played exceedingly well, despite his spectacles; but he gave, with something of a Frenchman's lofty *fanfaronnade*, larger odds to his adversary than his play justified. In dominoes, where such odds could not well be given, he insisted on playing such small stakes as two or three francs might cover.

In short, M. Lebeau puzzled Graham. All about M. Lebeau, his manner, his talk, was irreproachable,, and baffled suspicion; except in this, Graham gradually discovered that the *café* had a *quasi* political character. Listening to talkers round him, he overheard much that might well have shocked the notions of a moderate Liberal; much that held in disdain the objects to which, in 1869, an English Radical directed his aspirations. Vote by ballot, universal suffrage, etc. — such objects the French had already attained. By the talkers at the *Café Jean Jacques* they were deemed to be the tricky contrivances of tyranny. In fact, the talk was more scornful of what Englishmen understand by radicalism or democracy than Graham ever heard from the lips of an ultra-Tory, It assumed a strain of philosophy far above the vulgar squabbles of ordinary party politicians—a philosophy which took for its fundamental principles the destruction of religion and of private property.

These two objects seemed dependent the one on the other. The philosophers of the *Jean Jacques* held with that expounder of Internationalism, Eugene Dupont, "Nous ne voulons plus de religion, car les religions étouffent l'intelligence." * Now and then, indeed, a dissentient voice was raised as to the existence of a Supreme Being, but, with one exception, it soon sank into silence. No voice was raised in defence of private property. These sages appeared for the most part to belong to the class of *ouvriers* or artisans. Some of them were foreigners—Belgian, German, English; all seemed well off for their calling. Indeed they must have had comparatively high wages to judge by their dress and the money they spent on regaling themselves. The language of several was well chosen, at times eloquent. Some brought with them women who seemed respectable, and who often joined in the conversation, especially when it turned upon the law of marriage as a main obstacle to all personal liberty and social improvement.

If this was a subject on which the women did not all agree, still they discussed it without prejudice and with admirable *sang froid.* Yet many of them looked like wives and mothers. Now and then a young journeyman brought with him a young lady of more doubtful aspect, but such a couple kept aloof from the others. Now and then, too, a man evidently of higher station than that of *ouvrier*, and who was received by the philosophers with

* Discours par Eugene Dupont à la Clôture du Congrès de Bruxelles, Sept. 3, 1868.

courtesy and respect, joined one of the tables and ordered a bowl of punch for general participation. In such occasional visitors, Graham, still listening, detected a writer of the press; now and then, a small artist, or actor, or medical student. Among the *habitués* there was one man, an *ouvrier*, in whom Graham could not help feeling an interest. He was called Monnier, sometimes more familiarly Armand, his baptismal appellation. This man had a bold and honest expression of countenance. He talked like one who, if he had not read much, had thought much on the subjects he loved to discuss.

He argued against the capital of employers quite as ably as Mr. Mill has argued against the rights of property in land. He was still more eloquent against the laws of marriage and heritage. But his was the one voice not to be silenced in favor of a Supreme Being. He had at least the courage of his opinions, and was always thoroughly in earnest. M. Lebeau seemed to know this man, and honored him with a nod and a smile, when passing by him to the table he generally occupied. This familiarity with a man of that class, and of opinions so extreme, excited Graham's curiosity. One evening he said to Lebeau, "A queer fellow that you have just nodded to."

"How so?"

"Well, he has queer notions."

"Notions shared, I believe, by many of your countrymen?"

"I should think not many. Those poor simpletons yonder may have caught them from their French fellow-workmen, but I don't think that even the *gobemouches* in our National Reform Society open their mouths to swallow such wasps."

"Yet I believe the association to which most of those *ouvriers* belong had its origin in England."

"Indeed! what association?"

"The International."

"Ah, I have heard of that."

Lebeau turned his green spectacles full on Graham's face as he said slowly, "And what do you think of it?"

Graham prudently checked the disparaging reply that first occurred to him, and said, "I know so little about it that I would rather ask you."

"I think it might become formidable if it found able leaders who knew how to use it. Pardon me—how came you to know of this *café?* Were you recommended to it?"

"No; I happened to be in this neighborhood on business, and walked in, as I might into any other *café*."

"You don't interest yourself in the great social questions which are agitated below the surface of this best of all possible worlds?"

"I can't say that I trouble my head much about them."

"A game at dominoes before M. Georges arrives?"

"Willingly. Is M. Georges one of those agitators below the surface?"

"No indeed. It is for you to play."

Here M. Georges arrived, and no further conversation on political or social questions ensued.

Graham had already called more than once at M. Lebeau's office, and asked him to put into good French various letters on matters of business, the subjects of which had been furnished by M. Reneau. The office was rather imposing and stately, considering the modest nature of M. Lebeau's ostensible profession. It occupied the entire ground-floor of a corner house, with a front-door at one angle and a back-door at the other. The anteroom to his cabinet, and in which Graham had generally to wait some minutes before he was introduced, was generally well filled, and not only by persons who, by their dress and outward appearance, might be fairly supposed sufficiently illiterate to require his aid as polite letter-writers—not only by servant maids and *grisettes*, by sailors, zouaves, and journeymen workmen—but not unfrequently by clients evidently belonging to a higher, or at least a richer, class of society—men with clothes made by a fashionable tailor—men, again, who, less fashionably attired, looked like opulent tradesmen and fathers of well-to-do familles—the first generally young, the last generally middle-aged. All these denizens of a higher world were introduced by a saturnine clerk into M. Lebeau's reception-room, very quickly and in precedence of the *ouvriers* and *grisettes*.

"What can this mean?" thought Graham. "Is it really that this humble business avowed is the cloak to some political conspiracy concealed—the International Association?" And, so pondering, the clerk one day singled him

from the crowd and admitted him into M. Lebeau's cabinet. Graham thought the time had now arrived when he might safely approach the subject that had brought him to the Faubourg Montmartre.

"You are very good," said Graham speaking in the English of a young earl in our elegant novels—"you are very good to let me in while you have so many swells and nobs waiting for you in the other room. But, I say, old fellow, you have not the cheek to tell me that they want you to correct their cocker or spoon for them by proxy?"

"Pardon me," answered M. Lebeau in French, "if I prefer my own language in replying to you. I speak the English I learned many years ago, and your language in the *beau monde*, to which you evidently belong, is strange to me. You are quite right, however, in your surmise that I have other clients than those who, like yourself, think I could correct their verbs or their spelling. I have seen a great deal of the world—I know something of it, and something of the law; so that many persons come to me for advice and for legal information on terms more moderate than those of an *avoué*. But my antechamber is full, I am pressed for time; excuse me if I ask you to say at once in what I can be agreeable to you to-day."

"Ah!" said Graham, assuming a very earnest look, "you do know the world, that is clear; and you do know the law of France—eh?"

"Yes, a little."

"What I wanted to say at present may have something to do with French law, and I meant to ask you either to recommend to me a sharp lawyer, or to tell me how I can best get at your famous police here."

"Police!"

"I think I may require the service of one of those officers whom we in England call detectives; but if you are busy now, I can call to-morrow."

"I spare you two minutes. Say at once, dear Monsieur, what you want with law or police?"

"I am instructed to find out the address of a certain Louise Duval, daughter of a drawing-master named Adolphe Duval, living in the Rue —— in the year 1848."

Graham, while he thus said, naturally looked Lebeau in the face—not pryingly, not significantly, but as a man generally does look in the face of the other man whom he accosts seriously. The change in the face he regarded was slight, but it was unmistakable. It was the sudden meeting of the eyebrows, accompanied with the sudden jerk of the shoulder and bend of the neck, which betoken a man taken by surprise, and who pauses to reflect before he replies. His pause was but momentary.

"For what object is this address required?"

"That I don't know; but evidently for some advantage to Madame or Mademoiselle Duval, if still alive, because my employer authorizes me to spend no less than £100 in ascertaining where she is, if alive, or where she was buried, if dead; and if other means fail, I am instructed to advertise to the effect—'That if Louise Duval, or, in case of her death, any children of hers living in the year 1849, will communicate with some person whom I may appoint at Paris—such intelligence, authenticated, may prove to the advantage of the party advertised for.' I am, however, told not to resort to this means without consulting either with a legal adviser or the police."

"Hem!—have you inquired at the house where this lady was, you say, living in 1848?"

"Of course I have done that; but very clumsily, I daresay—through a friend—and learned nothing. But I must not keep you now. I think I shall apply at once to the police. What should I say when I get to the *bureau?*"

"Stop, Monsieur, stop. I do not advise you to apply to the police. It would be waste of time and money. Allow me to think over the matter. I shall see you this evening at the *Café Jean Jacques* at eight o'clock. Till then do nothing."

"All right: I obey you. The whole thing is out of my way of business—awfully. *Bon jour.*"

CHAPTER IX.

PUNCTUALLY at eight o'clock Graham Vane had taken his seat at a corner table at the remote end of the *Café Jean Jacques*, called for his cup of coffee and his evening journal, and awaited the arrival of M. Lebeau. His pa-

tience was not tasked long. In a few minutes the Frenchman entered, paused at the *comptoir*, as was his habit, to address a polite salutation to the well-dressed lady who there presided, nodded as usual to Armand Monnier, then glanced round, recognized Graham with a smile, and approached his table with the quiet grace of movement by which he was distinguished.

Seating himself opposite to Graham, and speaking in a voice too low to be heard by others, and in French, he then said—

"In thinking over your communication this morning, it strikes me as probable, perhaps as certain, that this Louise Duval or her children, if she have any, must be entitled to some moneys bequeathed to her by a relation or friend in England. What say you to that assumption, M. Lamb?"

"You are a sharp fellow," answered Graham. "Just what I say to myself. Why else should I be instructed to go to such expense in finding her out? Most likely, if one can't trace her, or her children born before the date named, any such moneys will go to some one else; and that some one else, whoever he be, has commissioned my employer to find out. But I don't imagine any sum due to her or her heirs can be much, or that the matter is very important; for, if so, the thing would not be carelessly left in the hands of one of the small fry like myself, and clapped in along with a lot of other business as an off-hand job."

"Will you tell me who employed you?"

"No, I don't feel authorized to do that at present; and I don't see the necessity of it. It seems to me, on consideraiion, a matter for the police to ferret out; only, as I asked before, how should I get at the police?"

"That is not difficult. It is just possible that I might help you better than any lawyer, or any detective."

"Why, did you ever know this Louise Duval?"

"Excuse me, M. Lamb: you refuse me your full confidence; allow me to imitate your reserve."

"Oho!" said Graham; "shut up as close as you like; it is nothing to me. Only observe, there is this difference between us, that I am employed by another. He does not authorize me to name him; and if I did commit that indiscretion, I might lose my bread and cheese. Whereas you have nobody's secret to guard but your own, in saying whether or not you ever knew a Madame or Mademoiselle Duval. And if you have some reason for not getting me the information I am instructed to obtain, that is also a reason for not troubling you farther. And after all, old boy" (with a familiar slap on Lebeau's stately shoulder), "after all, it is I who would employ you; you don't employ me. And if you find out the lady, it is you who would get the one hundred pounds, not I."

M. Lebeau mechanically brushed, with a light movement of hand, the shoulder which the Englishman had so pleasantly touched, drew himself and chair some inches back, and said slowly—

"M. Lamb, let us talk as gentleman to gentleman. Put aside the question of money altogether, I must first know why your employer wants to hunt out this poor Louise Duval. It may be to her injury, and I would do her none if you offered thousands where you offer pounds. I forestall the condition of mutual confidence; I own that I have known her—it is many years ago; and, M. Lamb, though a Frenchman very often injures a woman from love, he is in a worse plight for bread and cheese than I am if he injures her for money."

"Is he thinking of the duchess's jewels?" thought Graham.

"Bravo, *mon vieux*," he said aloud; "but as I don't know what my employer's motive in his commission is, perhaps you can enlighten me. How could his inquiry injure Louise Duval?"

"I cannot say; but you English have the power to divorce your wives. Louise Duval may have married an Englishman, separated from him, and he wants to know where he can find, in order to criminate and divorce her, or it may be to insist on her to return to him."

"Bosh! that is not likely."

"Perhaps, then, some English friend she may have known has left her a bequest, which would of course lapse to some one else if she be not living."

"By gad!" cried Graham, "I think you hit the right nail on the head: *c'est cela*. But what then?"

"Well, if I thought any substantial benefit to Louise Duval might result from the success of your inquiry, I would really see if it were

in my power to help you. But I must have time to consider."

"How long?"

"I can't exactly say; perhaps three or four days."

"*Bon!* I will wait. Here comes M. Georges. I leave you to dominoes and him. Good-night."

Late that night M. Lebeau was seated alone in a chamber connected with the cabinet in which he received visitors. A ledger was open before him, which he scanned with careful eyes, no longer screened by spectacles. The survey seemed to satisfy him. He murmured, "It suffices—the time has come;" closed the book—returned it to his bureau, which he locked up—and then wrote in cipher the letter here reduced into English:—

"DEAR AND NOBLE FRIEND,—Events march; the Empire is everywhere undermined. Our treasury has thriven in my hands; the sums subscribed and received by me through you have become more than quadrupled by advantageous speculations, in which M. Georges has been a most trustworthy agent. A portion of them I have continued to employ in the mode suggested—viz., in bringing together men discreetly chosen as being in their various ways representatives and ringleaders of the motley varieties that, when united at the right moment, form a Parisian mob. But from that right moment we are as yet distant. Before we can call passion into action, we must prepare opinion for change. I propose now to devote no inconsiderable portion of our fund towards the inauguration of a journal which shall gradually give voice to our designs. Trust to me to insure its success, and obtain the aid of writers who will have no notion of the uses to which they ultimately contribute. Now that the time has come to establish for ourselves an organ in the press, addressing higher orders of intelligence than those which are needed to destroy, and incapable of reconstructing, the time has also arrived for the reappearance in his proper name and rank of the man in whom you take so gracious an interest. In vain you have pressed him to do so before; till now he had not amassed together, by the slow process of petty gains and constant savings, with such additions as prudent speculations on his own account might contribute, the modest means necessary to his resumed position. And as he always contended against your generous offers, no consideration should ever tempt him either to appropriate to his personal use a single *sou* intrusted to him for a public purpose, or to accept from friendship the pecuniary aid which would abase him into the hireling of a cause. No! Victor de Mauléon despises too much the tools that he employs to allow any man hereafter to say, 'Thou also wert a tool, and hast been paid for thy uses.'

"But to restore the victim of calumny to his rightful place in this gaudy world, stripped of youth and reduced in fortune, is a task that may well seem impossible. To-morrow he takes the first step towards the achievement of the impossible. Experience is no bad substitute for youth, and ambition is made stronger by the goad of poverty.

"Thou shalt hear of his news soon."

BOOK FIFTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE next day at noon M. Louvier was closeted in his study with M. Gandrin.

"Yes," cried Louvier, "I have behaved very handsomsly to the *beau Marquis*. No one can say to the contrary."

"True," answered Gandrin. "Besides the easy terms for the transfer of the mortgages, that free bonus of 1,000 louis is a generous and noble act of munificence."

"Is it not! and my youngster has already begun to do with it as I meant and expected. He has taken a fine apartment; he has bought a *coupé* and horses; he has placed himself in the hands of the Chevalier de Finisterre; he is entered at the Jockey Club. *Parbleau*, the 1,000 louis will be soon gone."

"And then?"

"And then!—why, he will have tasted the sweets of Parisian life. He will think with disgust of the *vieux manoir*. He can borrow no more. I must remain sole mortgagee, and I shall behave as handsomely in buying his estates as I have behaved in increasing his income."

Here a clerk entered and said "that a monsieur wished to see M. Louvier for a few minutes in private, on urgent business."

"Tell him to send in his card."

"He has declined to do so, but states that he has already the honor of your acquaintance."

"A writer in the press, perhaps, or is he an artist?"

"I have not seen him before, Monsieur, but he has the air *trés comme il faut*."

"Well, you may admit him. I will not detain you longer, my dear Gandrin. My homages to Madame. *Bon jour*."

Lovieur bowed out M. Gandrin, and then rubbed his hands complacenly. He was in high spirits. "Aha, my dear Marquis, thou art in my trap now. Would it were thy father instead," he muttered chucklingly, and then took his stand on the hearth, with his back to the fireless grate. There entered a gentleman exceedingly well dressed—dressed according to the fashion, but still as became one of ripe middle age, not desiring to pass for younger than he was.

He was tall, with a kind of lofty ease in his air and his movements; not slight of frame, but spare enough to disguise the strength and endurance which belong to sinews and thews of steel, freed from all superfluous flesh, broad across the shoulders, thin in the flanks. His dark hair had in youth been luxuriant in thickness and curl; it was now clipped short, and had become bare at the temples, but it still retained the lustre of its color and the crispness of its ringlets. He wore neither beard nor moustache, and the darkness of his hair was contrasted by a clear fairness of complexion, healthful, though somewhat pale, and of eyes that rare gray tint which has in it no shade of blue—peculiar eyes, which give a very distinct character to the face. The man must have been singularly handsome in youth, he was handsome still, though probably in his forty-seventh or forty-eight year, doubtless a very different kind of comeliness. The form of the features and the contour of the face were those that suit the rounded beauty of the Greek outline, and such beauty would naturally have been the attribute of the countenance in earlier days. But the cheeks were now thin, and with lines of care and sorrow between nostril and lip, so that the shape of the face seemed lengthened, and the features had become more salient.

Louvier gazed at his visitor with a vague idea that he had seen him before and could

not remember where or when; but, at all events, he recognized at the first glance a man of rank and of the great world.

"Pray be seated, Monsieur?" he said, resuming his own easy-chair.

The visitor obeyed the invitation with a very graceful bend of his head, drew his chair near to the financier's, stretched his limbs with the ease of a man making himself at home, and fixing his calm bright eyes quietly on Louvier, said, with a bland smile—

"My dear old friend, do you not remember me? You are less altered than I am."

Louvier stared hard and long; his lip fell, his cheek paled, and at last he faltered out, "*Ciel!* is it possible! Victor—the Vicomte de Mauléon?"

"At your service, my dear Louvier."

There was a pause; the financier was evidently confused and embarrassed, and not less evidently the visit of the "dear old friend" was unwelcome.

"Vicomte," he said at last, "this is indeed a surprise; I thought you had long since quitted Paris for good."

"'*L'homme propose*,' etc. I have returned, and mean to enjoy the rest of my days in the metropolis of the Graces and the Pleasures. What though we are not so young as we were, Louvier,—we have more vigor in us than the new generation; and though it may no longer befit us to renew the gay carousals of old, life has still excitements as vivid for the social temperament and ambitious mind. Yes, the *roi des viveurs* returns to Paris for a more solid throne than he filled before."

"Are you serious?"

"As serious as the French gaiety will permit one to be."

"Alas, M. le Vicomte! can you flatter yourself that you will regain the society you have quitted, and the name you have——"

Louvier stopped short; something in the Vicomte's eye daunted him.

"The name I have laid aside for convenience of travel. Princes travel incognito, and so may a simple *gentilhomme*. 'Regain my place in society, say you? Yes; it is not that which troubles me."

"What does?"

"The consideration whether on a very modest income I can be sufficiently esteemed for myself to render that society more pleasant than ever. Ah, *mon cher!* why recoil? why so frightened? Do you think I am going to ask you for money. Have I ever done so since we parted? and did I ever do so before without repaying you? Bah! you *roturiers* are worse than the Bourbons. You never learn or unlearn. "*Fors non mutat genus.*'"

The magnificent *millionnaire*, accustomed to the homage of grandees from the faubourg and *lions* from the Chaussée d'Antin, rose to his feet in superb wrath, less at the taunting words than at the haughtiness of mien with which they were uttered.

"Monsieur, I cannot permit you to address me in that tone. Do you mean to insult me?"

"Certainly not. Tranquillize your nerves, reseat yourself, and listen;—reseat yourself, I say."

Louvier dropped into his chair.

No," resumed the Vicomte, politely, "I do not come here to insult you, neither do I come to ask money; I assume that I am in my rights when I ask M. Louvier what has become of Louise Duval?"

"Louise Duval! I know nothing about her."

"Possibly not now; but you did know her well enough, when we two parted, to be a candidate for her hand. You did know her enough to solicit my good offices in promotion of your suit; and you did, at my advice, quit Paris to seek her at Aix-la-Chapelle."

"What, have you, M. de Mauléon, not heard news of her since that day?"

"I decline to accept your question as an answer to mine. You went to Aix-la-Chapelle; you saw Louise Duval; at my urgent request she condescended to accept your hand."

"No, M. de Mauléon, she did not accept my hand. I did not even see her. The day before I arrived at Aix-la-Chapelle she had left it—not alone—left it with her lover."

"Her lover! you do not mean the miserable Englishman who——"

"No Englishman," interrupted Louvier, fiercely. "Enough that the step she took placed an eternal barrier between her and myself. I have never even sought to hear of her since that day. Vicomte, that woman was the one love of my life. I loved her, as you must have known, to folly—to madness. And how was my love requited? Ah! you open a very deep wound, M. le Vicomte."

"Pardon me, Louvier; I did not give you credit for feelings so keen and so genuine, nor did I think myself thus easily affected by matters belonging to a past life so remote from the present. For whom did Louise forsake you?"

"It matters not—he is dead."

"I regret to hear that; I might have avenged you."

"I need no one to avenge my wrong. Let this pass."

"Not yet. Louise, you say, fled with a seducer? So proud as she was, I can scarcely believe it."

"Oh, it was not with a *roturier* she fled; her pride would not have allowed that."

"He must have deceived her somehow. Did she continue to live with him?"

"That question, at least, I can answer; for though I lost all trace of her life, his life was pretty well known to me till its end; and a very few months after she fled he was enchained to another. Let us talk of her no more."

"Ay, ay," muttered De Mauléon, "some disgraces are not to be redeemed, and therefore not to be discussed. To me, though a relation, Louise Duval was but little known, and after what you tell me, I cannot dispute your right to say, 'talk of her no more.' You loved her, and she wronged you. My poor Louvier, pardon me if I made an old wound bleed afresh."

These words were said with a certain pathetic tenderness; they softened Louvier towards the speaker.

After a short pause the Vicomte swept his hand over his brow, as if to dismiss from his mind a painful and obtrusive thought; then with a changed expression of countenance—an expression frank and winning—with voice and with manner in which no vestige remained of the irony or haughtiness with which he had resented the frigidity of his reception, he drew his chair still nearer to Louvier's and resumed: "Our situations, Paul Louvier, are much changed since we two became friends. I then could say, 'Open sesame' to whatever recesses, forbidden to vulgar footsteps, the adventurer whom I took by the hand might wish to explore. In those days my heart was warm; I liked you, Louvier—honestly liked you. I think our personal acquaintance commenced in some gay gathering of young *viveurs*, whose behavior to you offended my sense of good breeding?"

Louvier colored, and muttered inaudibly.

De Mauléon continued: "I felt it due to you to rebuke their incivilities, the more so as you evinced on that occasion your own superiority in sense and temper, permit me to add, with no lack of becoming spirit."

Louvier bowed his head, evidently gratified.

"From that day we became familiar. If any obligation to me were incurred, you would not have been slow to return it. On more than one occassion when I was rapidly wasting money—and money was plentiful with you—you generously offered me your purse. On more than one occasion I accepted the offer; and you would never have asked repayment if I had not insisted on repaying. I was no less grateful for your aid."

Louvier made a movement as if to extend his hand, but he checked the impulse.

"There was another attraction which drew me towards you. I recognized in your character a certain power in sympathy with that power which I imagined lay dormant in myself, and not to be found among the *freluquets* and *lions* who were my more habitual associates. Do you not remember some hours of serious talk we have had together when we lounged in the Tuileries, or sipped our coffee in the garden of the Palais Royal?—hours when we forgot that those were the haunts of idlers, and thought of the stormy actions affecting the history of the world of which they had been the scene—hours when I confided to you, as I confided to no other man, the ambitious hopes for the future which my follies in the present, alas! were hourly tending to frustrate?"

"Ay, I remember the starlit night; it was not in the gardens of the Tuileries nor in the Palais Royal,—it was on the Pont de la Concorde, on which we had paused, noting the starlight on the waters, that you said, pointing towards the walls of the *Corps Législatif*, 'Paul, when I once get into the Chamber, how long will it take me to become First Minister of France?'"

"Did I say so?—possibly; but I was too young then for admission to the Chamber, and I fancied I had so many years yet to spare in idle loiterings at the Fountain of Youth. Pass

over these circumstances. You became in love with Louise. I told you her troubled history; it did not diminish your love; and then I frankly favored your suit. You set out for Aix-la-Chapalle a day or two afterwards—then fell the thunderbolt which shattered my existence—and we have never met again till this hour. You did not receive me kindly, Paul Louvier."

"But," said Louvier, falteringly, "but since you refer to that thunderbolt, you cannot but be aware that—that——"

"I was subjected to a calumny which I expect those who have known me as well as you did to assist me now to refute."

"If it be really a calumny."

"Heavens, man! could you ever doubt *that?*" cried De Mauléon, with heat; "ever doubt that I would rather have blown out my brains than allowed them even to conceive the idea of a crime so base?"

"Pardon me," answered Louvier, meekly, "but I did not return to Paris for months after you had disappeared. My mind was unsettled by the news that awaited me at Aix; I sought to distract it by travel—visited Holland and England; and when I did return to Paris, all that I heard of your story was the darker side of it. I willingly listen to your own account. You never took, or at least never accepted, the Duchesse de ——'s jewels; and your friend M. de N. never sold them to one jeweller and obtained their substitutes in paste from another?"

The Vicomte made a perceptible effort to repress an impulse of rage; then reseating himself in his chair, and with that slight shrug of the shoulder by which a Frenchman implies to himself that rage would be out of place, replied calmly, "M. de N. did as you say, but, of course, not employed by me, nor with my knowledge. Listen; the truth is this—the time has come to tell it: Before you left Paris for Aix I found myself on the brink of ruin. I had glided towards it with my characteristic recklessness—with that scorn of money for itself, that sanguine confidence in the favor of fortune, which are vices common to every *roi des viveurs*. Poor mock Alexanders that we spendthifts are in youth! we divide all we have among others, and when asked by some prudent friend, 'What have you left for your own share?' answer 'Hope.' I knew, of course, that my patrimony was rapidly vanishing; but then my horses were matchless. I had enough to last me for years on their chance of winning—of course they would win. But you may recollect when we parted that I was troubled,—creditors' bills before me—usurers' bills too,—and you, my dear Louvier, pressed on me your purse; were angry when I refused it. How could I accept? All my chance of repayment was in the speed of a horse. I believed in that chance for myself; but for a trustful friend, no. Ask your own heart now—nay, I will not say heart—ask your own common-sense, whether a man who then put aside your purse—spendthrift, *vaurien*, though he might be—was likely to steal or accept a woman's jewels—*Vas, mon pauvre Louvier*, again I say, '*Fors non mutat genus.*'"

Despite the repetition of the displeasing patrician motto, such reminiscences of his visitor's motely character—irregular, turbulent, the reverse of severe, but, in its own loose way, grandly generous and grandly brave—struck both on the common-sense and the heart of the listener; and the Frenchman recognized the Frenchman. Louvier doubted De Mauléon's word no more, bowed his head, and said, "Victor de Mauléon, I have wronged you—go on."

"On the day after you left for Aix came that horse-race on which my all depended: it was lost. The loss absorbed the whole of my remaining fortune, it absorbed about 20,000 francs in excess, a debt of honor to De N., whom you called my friend: friend he was not; imitator, follower, flatterer, yes. Still I deemed him enough my friend to say to him 'Give me a little time to pay the money; I must sell my stud, or write to my only living relation from whom I have expectations.' You remember that relation—Jacques de Mauléon, old and unmarried. By De N.'s advice I did write to my kinsman. No answer came; but what did come were fresh bills from creditors. I then calmly calculated my assets. The sale of my stud and effects *might* suffice to pay every *sou* that I owed, including my debt to De N.; but that was not quite certain—at all events, when the debts were paid I should be beggared. Well, you know, Louvier, what we Frenchman are: how Nature has denied to us the quality of patience: how involuntarily suicide presents itself to us when hope is lost—

and suicide seemed to me here due to honor—vix., to the certain discharge of my liabilities—for the stud and effects of Victor de Mauléon, *roi des viveurs*, would command much higher prices if he died like Cato than if he ran away from his fate like Pompey. Doubtless De N. guessed my intention from my words or my manner; but on the very day in which I had made all preparations for quitting the world from which sunshine had vanished, I received in a blank envelope bank-notes amounting to 70,000 francs, and the post-mark on the envelope was that of the town of Fontainebleau, near to which lived my rich kinsman Jacques. I took it for granted that the sum came from him. Displeased as he might have been with my wild career, still I was his natural heir. The sum sufficed to pay my debt to De N., to all creditors, and leave a surplus. My sanguine spirits returned. I would sell my stud; I would retrench, reform, go to my kinsman as the penitent son. The fatted calf would be killed, and I should wear purple yet. You understand that, Louvier?"

"Yes, yes; so like you. Go on."

"Now, then, came the thunderbolt! Ah! in those sunny days you used to envy me for being so spoilt by women. The Duchesse de —— had conceived for me one of those romantic fancies which women without children, and with ample leisure for the waste of affection, do sometimes conceive for very ordinary men younger than themselves, but in whom they imagine they discover sinners to reform or heroes to exalt. I had been honored by some notes from the Duchesse in which this sort of romance was owned. I had not replied to them encouragingly. In truth, my heart was then devoted to another,—the English girl whom I had wooed as my wife—who, despite her parents' retractation of their consent to our union when they learned how dilapidated were my fortunes, pledged herself to remain faithful to me, and wait for better days." Again De Mauléon paused in suppressed emotion, and then went on hurriedly: "No, the Duchesse did not inspire me with guilty passion, but she did inspire me with an affectionate respect. I felt that she was by nature meant to be a great and noble creature, and was, nevertheless, at that moment wholly misled from her right place amongst women by an allusion of mere imagination about a man who happened then to be very much talked about, and perhaps resembled some Lothario in the novels which she was always reading. We lodged, as you may remember, in the same house."

"Yes, I remember. I remember how you once took me to a great ball given by the Duchesse; how handsome I thought her, though no longer young; and you say right—how I did envy you, that night!"

"From that night, however, the Duc, not unnaturally, became jealous. He reproved the Duchess for her too amiable manner towards a *mauvais sujet* like myself, and forbade her in future to receive my visits. It was then that these notes became frequent and clandestine, brought to me by her maid, who took back my somewhat chilling replies.

"But to proceed. In the flush of my high spirits, and in the insolence of magnificent ease with which I paid De N. the trifle I owed him, something he said made my heart stand still. I told him that the money received had come from Jacques de Mauléon, and that I was going down to his house that day to thank him. He replied, 'Don't go; it did not come from him.' 'It must; see the post-mark of the envelope—Fontainebleau.' 'I posted it at Fontainebleau.' 'You sent me the money, you!' 'Nay, that is beyond my means. Where it came from,' said this *misérable*, 'much more may yet come;' and then he narrated, with that cynicism so in vogue at Paris, how he had told the Duchesse (who knew him as my intimate associate) of my stress of circumstance, of his fear that I meditated something desperate; how she gave him the jewels to sell and to substitute; how, in order to baffle my suspicion and frustrate my scruples, he had gone to Fontainebleau and there posted the envelope containing the bank-notes, out of which he secured for himself the payment he deemed otherwise imperilled. De N. having made this confession, hurried down the stairs swiftly enough to save himself a descent by the window. Do you believe me still?"

"Yes; you were always so hot-blooded, and De N. so considerate of self, I believe you implicitly."

"Of course I did what any man would do—I wrote a hasty letter to the Duchesse, stating all my gratitude for an act of pure friendship so noble; urging also the reasons that rendered it impossible for a man of honor to profit by

such an act. Unhappily, what had been sent was paid away ere I knew the facts; but I could not bear the thought of life till my debt to her was acquitted; in short, Louvier, conceive for yourself the sort of letter which I —which any honest man—would write, under circumstances so cruel."

"H'm!" grunted Louvier.

"Something, however, in my letter conjoined with what De N. had told her as to my state of mind, alarmed this poor woman, who had deigned to take in me an interest so little deserved. Her reply, very agitated and incoherent, was thought to me by her maid, who had taken my letter, and by whom, as I before said, our correspondence had been of late carried on. In her reply she implored me to decide, to reflect on nothing till I had seen her; stated how the rest of her day was pre-engaged; and since to visit her openly had been made impossible by the Duc's interdict, enclosed the key to the private entrance to her rooms, by which I could gain an interview with her at ten o'clock that night, an hour at which the Duc had informed her he should be out till late at his club. Now, however great the indiscretion which the Duchesse here committed, it is due to her memory to say that I am convinced that her dominant idea was that I meditated self-destruction; that no time was to be lost to save me from it; and for the rest she trusted to the influence which a woman's tears and adjurations and reasonings have over even the strongest and hardest men. It is only one of those coxcombs in whom the world of fashion abounds who could have admitted a thought that would have done wrong to the impulsive, generous, imprudent eagerness of a woman to be in time to save from death by his own hand a fellow-being for whom she had conceived an interest. I so construed her note. At the hour she named I admitted myself into the rooms by the key she sent. You know the rest: I was discovered by the Duc and by the agents of police in the cabinet in which the Duchesse's jewels wery kept. The key that admitted me into the cabinet was found in my possession."

De Mauléon's voice here faltered, and he covered his face with a convulsive hand. Almost in the same breath he recovered from visible signs of emotion, and went on with a half-laugh.

"Ah! you envied me, did you, for being spoiled by the women? Enviable position indeed was mine that night. The Duc obeyed the first impulse of his wrath. He imagined that I had dishonored him: he would dishonor me in return. Easier to his pride, too, a charge against the robber of jewels than against a favored lover of his wife. But when I, obeying the first necessary obligation of honor, invented on the spur of the moment the story by which the Duchesse's reputation was cleared from suspicion, accused myself of a frantic passion and the trickery of a fabricated key, the Duc's true nature of *gentilhomme* came back. He retracted the charge which he could scarcely even at the first blush have felt to be well-founded; and as the sole charge left was simply that which men *comme il faut* do not refer to criminal courts and police investigations, I was left to make my bow unmolested and retreat to my own rooms, awaiting there such communications as the Duc might deem it right to convey to me on the morrow.

"But on the morrow the Duc, with his wife and personal suite, quitted Paris *en route* for Spain; the bulk of his retinue, including the offending abigail, was discharged; and, whether through these servants or through the police, the story before evening was in the mouth of every gossip in club or *café*—exaggerated, distorted, to my ignominy and shame. My detection in the cabinet, the sale of the jewels, the substitution of paste by De N., who was known to be my servile imitator, and reputed to be my abject tool; all my losses on the turf, my debts,—all these scattered fibres of flax were twisted together in a rope that would have hanged a dog with a much better name than mine. If some disbelieved that I could be a thief, few of those who should have known me best held me guiltless of a baseness almost equal to that of theft—the exaction of profit from the love of a foolish woman."

"But you could have told your own tale, shown the letters you had received from the Duchesse, and cleared away every stain on your honor."

"How?—shown her letters, ruined her character, even stated that she had caused her jewels to be sold for the uses of a young *roué!* Ah no, Louvier! I would rather have gone to the galleys."

"H'm!" grunted Louvier again.

"The Duc generously gave me better means of righting myself. Three days after he quitted Paris I received a letter from him, very politely written, expressing his great regret than any words implying the suspicion too monstrous and absurd to need refutation should have escaped him in the surprise of the moment; but stating that since the offence I had owned was one that he could not overlook, he was under the necessity of asking the only reparation I could make. That if it 'deranged' me to quit Paris, he would return to it for the purpose required; but that if I would give him the additional satisfaction of suiting his convenience, he should prefer to await my arrival at Bayonne, where he was detained by the indisposition of the Duchesse."

"You have still that letter?" asked Louvier, quickly.

"Yes; with other more important documents constituting what I may call my *pièces justificatives*.

"I need not say that I replied stating the time at which I should arrive at Bayonne, and the hotel at which I should await the Duc's command. Accordingly I set out that same day, gained the hotel named, despatched to the Duc the announcement of my arrival, and was considering how I should obtain a second in some officer quartered in the town—for my soreness and resentment at the marked coldness of my former acquaintances at Paris had forbidden me to seek a second among any of that faithless number—when the Duc himself entered my room. Judge of my amaze at seeing him in person; judge how much greater the amaze became when he advanced with a grave but cordial smile, offering me his hand!

"'M. de Mauléon,' said he, 'since I wrote to you, facts have become known to me which would induce me rather to ask your friendship than call on you to defend your life. Madame la Duchesse has been seriously ill since we left Paris, and I refrained from all explanations likely to add to the hysterical excitement under which she was suffering. It is only this day that her mind became collected, and she herself then gave me her entire confidence. Monsieur, she insisted on my reading the letters that you addressed to her. Those letters, Monsieur, suffice to prove your innocence of any design against my peace. The Duchesse has so candidly avowed her own indiscretion, has so clearly established the distinction between indiscretion and guilt, that I have granted her my pardon with a lightened heart and a firm belief that we shall be happier together than we have been yet.'

"The Duc continued his journey the next day, but he subsequently honored me with two or three letters written as friend to friend, and in which you will find repeated the substance of what I have stated him to say by word of mouth."

"But why not then have returned to Paris? Such letters, at least, you might have shown, and in braving your caluminators you would have soon lived them down."

"You forget that I was a ruined man When, by the sale of my horses, etc., my debts, including what was owed to the Duchesse, and which I remitted to the Duc, were discharged, the balance left to me would not have maintained me a week at Paris. Besides, I felt so sore, so indignant. Paris and the Parisians had become to me so hateful. And to crown all, that girl, that English girl, whom I had so loved, on whose fidelity—I had so counted—well, I received a letter from her, gently but coldly bidding me farewell for ever. I do not think she believed me guilty of theft, but doubtless the offence I had confessed, in order to save the honor of the Duchesse, could but seem to her all-sufficient! Broken in spirit, bleeding at heart to the very core, still self-destruction was no longer to be thought of. I would not die till I could once more lift up my head as Victor de Mauléon."

"What then became of you my poor Victor?"

"Ah! that is a tale too long for recital. I have played so many parts that I am puzzled to recognize my own identity with the Victor de Mauléon whose name I abandoned. I have been a soldier in Algeria, and won my cross on the field of battle—that cross and my colonel's letter are among my *pièces justificatives*. I have been a gold-digger in California, a speculater in New York, of late in callings, obscure and humble. But all in my adventures, under whatever name, I have earned testimonials of probity, could manifestations of so vulgar a virtue be held of account by the enlightened people of Paris. I come now to a close. The Vicomte de Mauléon is about to

reappear in Paris, and the first to whom he announces that sublime avatar is Paul Louvier. When settled in some modest apartment, I shall place in your hands my *pièces justificatives*. I shall ask you to summon my surviving relations or connection, among which are the counts de Vandemar, Beauvilliers, De Passy, and the Marquis de Rochebriant, with any friends of your own who sway the opinions of the Great World. You will place my justification before them, expressing your own opinion that it suffices;—in a word, you will give me the sanction of your countenance. For the rest I trust to myself to propitiate the kindly and to silence the calumnious. I have spoken; what say you?"

"You overrate my power in society. Why not appeal yourself to your high-born relations?"

"No, Louvier; I have too well considered the case to alter my decision. It is through you, and you alone, that I shall approach my relations. My vindicator must be a man of whom the vulgar cannot say, 'Oh, he's a relation — a fellow-noble: those aristocrats whitewash each other.' It must be an authority with the public at large—a *bourgeois*, a *millionaire*, a *roi de la Bourse*. I choose you, and that ends the discussion."

Louvier could not help laughing good-humoredly at the *sang froid* of the Vicomte. He was once more under the domination of a man who had for a time dominated all with whom he lived.

De Mauléon continued: "Your task will be easy enough. Society changes rapidly at Paris. Few persons now exist who have more than a vague recollection of the circumstances which can be so easily explained to my complete vindication when the vindication comes from a man of your solid respectability and social influence. Besides, I have political objects in view. You are a Liberal; the Vandemars and Rochebriants are Legitimists. I prefer a godfather on the Liberal side. *Pardieu, mon ami*, why such coquettish hesitation? Said and done. Your hand on it."

"There is my hand then. I will do all I can to help you."

"I know you will, old friend; and you do both kindly and wisely." Here De Mauléon cordially pressed the hand he held, and departed.

On gaining the street, the Vicomte glided into a neighboring courtyard, in which he had left his *fiacre*, and bade the coachman drive towards the Boulevard Sebastopol. On the way, he took from a small bag that he had left in the carriage the flaxen wig and pale whiskers which distinguished M. Lebeau, and mantled his elegant habiliments in an immense cloak, which he had also left in the *fiacre*. Arrived at the Boulevard Sebastopol he drew up the collar of the cloak so as to conceal much of his face, stopped the driver, paid him quickly, and, bag in hand, hurried on to another stand of *fiacres* at a little distance, entered one, and drove to the Faubourg Montmartre, dismissed the vehicle at the mouth of a street not far from M. Lebeau's office, and gained on foot the private side door of the house, let himself in with his latch-key, entered the private room on the inner side of his office, locked the door, and proceeded leisurely to exchange the brilliant appearance which the Vicomte de Mauléon had borne on his visit to the *millionaire*, for the sober raiment and *bourgeoise* air of M. Lebeau, the letter-writer.

Then after locking up his former costume in a drawer of his *secrétaire*, he sat himself down and wrote the following lines:—

"DEAR M. GEORGES,—I advise you strongly, from information that has just reached me, to lose no time in pressing M. Savarin to repay the sum I recommended you to lend him, and for which you hold his bill due this day. The scandal of legal measures against a writer so distinguished should be avoided if possible. He will avoid it, and get the money somehow. But he must be urgently pressed. If you neglect this warning, my responsibility is past.—*Agreez mes sentimens les plus sinceres.*

"J. L."

CHAPTER II.

THE Marquis de Rochebriant is no longer domiciled in an attic in the gloomy faubourg. See him now in a charming *appartement de garçon au premier* in the Rue du Helder, close by the promenades and haunts of the *mode*. It had been furnished and inhabited by a brilliant young provincial from Bordeaux, who, coming into an inheritance of 100,000 francs, had rushed up to Paris to enjoy himself, and make his million at the Bourse. He *had* enjoyed himself thoroughly—he had been a darl-

ing of the *demi-monde*. He had been a successful and an inconstant gallant. Zélie had listened to his vows of eternal love, and his offers of unlimited *cachemires*. Desirée, succeeding Zélie, had assigned to him her whole heart, or all that was left of it, in gratitude for the ardor of his passion, and the diamonds and *coupé* which accompanied and attested the ardor. The superb Hortense, supplanting Desirée, received his visits in the charming apartment he furnished for her, and entertained him and his friends at the most delicate little suppers, for the moderate sum of 4,000 francs a month.

Yes, he had enjoyed himself thoroughly, but he had not made a million at the Bourse. Before the year was out, the 100,000 francs were gone. Compelled to return to his province, and by his hard-hearted relations ordained, on penalty of starvation, to marry the daughter of an *avoué*, for the sake of her *dot* and a share in the hated drudgery of the *avoué's* business, —his apartment was to be had for a tenth part of the original cost of its furniture. A certain Chevalier de Finisterre, to whom Louvier had introduced the Marquis as a useful fellow, who knew Paris, and would save him from being cheated, had secured this *bijou* of an apartment for Alain, and concluded the bargain for the *bagatelle* of £500. The Chevalier took the same advantageous occasion to purchase the English well-bred hack, and the neat *coupé* and horses which the Bordelais was also necessitated to dispose of. These purchases made, the Marquis had some 5,000 francs (£200) left out of Louvier's premium of £1,000. The Marquis, however, did not seem alarmed or dejected by the sudden diminution of capital so expediously effected. The easy life thus commenced seemed to him too natural to be fraught with danger; and easy though it was, it was a very simple and modest sort of life compared with that of many other men of his age to whom Enguerrand had introduced him, though most of them had an income less than his, and few, indeed, of them were his equals in dignity of birth.

Could a Marquis de Rochebriant, if he lived at Paris at all, give less than 3,000 francs a-year for his apartment, or mount a more humble establishment than that confined to a valet and a tiger, two horses for his *coupé* and one for the saddle? "Impossible," said the Chevalier de Finisterre, decidedly; and the Marquis bowed to so high an authority. He thought within himself, "If I find in a few months that I am exceeding my means, I can but dispose of my rooms and my horses, and return to Rochebriant a richer man by far than I left it."

To say truth, the brilliant seductions of Paris had already produced their effect, not only on the habits, but on the character and cast of thought, which the young noble had brought with him from the feudal and melancholy Bretagne.

Warmed by the kindness with which, once introduced by his popular kinsmen, he was everywhere received, the reserve or shyness which is the compromise between the haughtiness of self-esteem and the painful doubt of appreciation by others, rapidly melted away. He caught insensibly the polished tone, at once so light and so cordial, of his new-made friends. With all the efforts of the democrats to establish equality and fraternity, it is among the aristocrats that equality and fraternity are most to be found. All *gentilshommes* in the best society are equals; and whether they embrace or fight each other, they embrace or fight as brothers of the same family.

But with the tone of manners, Alain de Rochebriant imbibed still more insensibly the lore of that philosophy which young idlers in pursuit of pleasure teach to each other. Probably in all civilized and luxurious capitals that philosophy is very much the same among the same class of idlers at the same age; probably it flourishes in Pekin not less than at Paris. If Paris has the credit, or discredit, of it more than any other capital, it is because in Paris more than in any other capital it charms the eye by grace and amuses the ear by wit. A philosophy which takes the things of this life very easily—which has a smile and a shrug of the shoulders for any pretender to the heroic—which subdivides the wealth of passion into the pocket-money of caprices—is always in or out of love, ankle-deep, never venturing a plunge—which, light of heart, as of tongue, turns "the solemn plausibilities" of earth into subjects for epigrams and *bons mots*—it jests at loyalty to kings, and turns up its nose at enthusiam for commonwealths—it abjures all grave studies—it shuns all profound emotions. We have crowds of such philosophers in Lon-

don; but there they are less noticed, because the aggreeable attributes of the sect are there dimmed and obfuscated. It is not a philosophy that flowers richly in the reek of frogs, and in the teeth of east winds; it wants for full development the light atmosphere of Paris. Now this philosophy began rapidly to exercise its charms upon Alain de Rochebriant.

Even in the society of professed Legitimists, he felt that faith had deserted the Legitimist creed or taken refuge only as a companion of religion in the hearts of high-born women and a small minority of priests. His chivalrous loyalty still struggled to keep its ground, but its roots were very much loosened. He saw —for his natural intellect was keen—that the cause of the Bourbon was hopeless, at least for the present, because it had ceased, at least for the present, to *be* a cause. His political creed thus shaken, with it was shaken also that adherence to the past which had stifled his ambition of a future. That ambition began to breathe and to stir, though he owned it not to others—though, as yet, he scarce distinguished its whispers, much less direct its movements towards any definite object. Meanwhile, all that he knew of his ambition was the new-born desire for social success.

We see him, then, under the quick operation of this change in sentiments and habits, reclined on the *fauteuil* before his fireside, and listening to his college friend, of whom we have so long lost sight, Frederic Lemercier. Frederic had breakfasted with Alain—a breakfast such as might have contented the author of the *Almanach des Gourmands*, and provided from the *Café Anglais*. Frederic has just thrown aside his regalia.

"*Pardieu!* my dear Alain. If Louvier has no sinister object in the generosity of his dealings with you, he will have raised himself prodigiously in my estimation. I shall forsake, in his favor, my allegiance to Duplessis, though that clever fellow has just made a wondrous *coup* in the Egyptians, and I gain 40,000 francs by having followed his advice. But if Duplessis has a head as long as Louvier's, he certainly has not an equal greatness of soul. Still, my dear friend, will you pardon me, if I speak frankly, and in the way of a warning homily?"

"Speak; you cannot oblige me more."

"Well, then, I know that you can no more live at Paris in the way you are doing, or mean to do, without some fresh addition to your income, than a lion could live in the Jardin des Plantes upon an allowance of two mice a-week."

"I don't see that. Deducting what I pay to my aunt—and I cannot get her to take more than 6,000 francs a-year—I have 700 napoleons left, net and clear. My rooms and stables are equipped, and I have 2,500 francs in hand. On 700 napoleons a-year, I calculate that I can very easily live as I do; and if I fail—well, I must return to Rochebriant. Seven hundred napoleons a-year will be a magnificent rental there."

Frederic shook his head.

"You do not know how one expense leads to another. Above all, you do not calculate the chief part of one's expenditure—the unforeseen. You will play at the Jockey Club and lose half your income in a night."

"I shall never touch a card."

"So you say now, innocent as a lamb of the force of example. At all events, *beau seigneur*, I presume you are not going to resuscitate the part of the *Ermite de la Chaussée d'Antin;* and the fair *Parisiennes* are demons of extravagance."

"Demons whom I shall not court."

"Did I say you would? They will court you. Before another month has flown you will be inundated with *billets-doux*."

"It is not a shower that will devastate my humble harvest. But, *mon cher*, we are falling upon very gloomy topics. *Laissez-moi tranquille* in my illusions, if illusions they be. Ah, you cannot conceive what a new life opens to the man who, like myself, has passed the dawn of his youth in privation and fear, when he suddenly acquires competence and hope. If it lasts only a year, it will be something to say 'Vixi.'"

"Alain," said Frederic, very earnestly, "believe me, I should not have assumed the ungracious and inappropriate task of Mentor, if it were only a year's experience at stake, or if you were in the position of men like myself—free from the encumbrance of a great name, and heavily mortgaged lands. Should you fail to pay regularly the interest due to Louvier, he has the power to put up at public auction, and there to buy in for himself, your *château* and domain."

"I am aware that in strict law he would have such power, though I doubt if he would use it. Louvier is certainly a much better and more generous fellow than I could have expected; and if I believe De Finisterre, he has taken a sincere liking to me, on account of affection to my poor father. But why should not the interest be paid regularly? The revenues from Rochebriant are not likely to decrease, and the charge on them is lightened by the contract with Louvier. And I will confide to you a hope I entertain of a very large addition to my rental."

"How?"

"A chief part of my rental is derived from forests, and De Finisterre has heard of a capitalist who is disposed to make a contract for their sale at the fall this year, and may probably extend it to future years, at a price far exceeding that which I have hitherto obtained."

"Pray be cautious. De Finisterre is not a man I should implicitly trust in such matters."

"Why? do you know anything against him? He is in the best society—perfect *gentilhomme*—and, as his name may tell you, a fellow-Breton. You yourself allow, and so does Enguerrand, that the purchases he made for me—in this apartment, my horses, etc.—are singularly advantageous.'

"Quite true; the Chevalier is reputed sharp and clever, is said to be very amusing, and a first-rate *piquet*-player. I don't know him personally. I am not in his set. I have no valid reason to disparage his character, nor do I conjecture any motive he could have to injure or mislead you. Still, I say, be cautious how far you trust to his advice or recommendation."

"Again I ask why?"

"He is unlucy to his friends. He attaches himself much to men younger than himself; and somehow or other I have observed that most of them have come to grief. Besides, a person in whose sagacity I have great confidence warned me against making the Chevalier's acquaintance, and said to me, in his blunt way, 'De Finisterre came to Paris with nothing; he has succeeded to nothing; he belongs to no ostensible profession by which anything can be made. But evidently now he has picked up a good deal; and in proportion as any young associate of his becomes poorer, De Finisterre seems mysteriously to become richer. Shun that sort of acquaintance.'"

"Who is your sagacious adviser?"

"Duplessis."

"Ah, I thought so. That bird of prey fancies every other bird looking out for pigeons. I fancy that Duplessis is like all those money-getters, a seeker after fashion, and De Finisterre has not returned his bow."

"My dear Alain, I am to blame; nothing is so irritating as a dispute about the worth of the men we like. I began it, now let it be dropped; only make me one promise, that if you should be in arrear, or if need presses, you will come at once to me. It was very well to be absurdly proud in an attic, but that pride will be out of place in your *appartement au premier*."

"You are the best fellow in the world, Frederic, and I make you the promise you ask," said Alain, cheerfully, but yet with a secret emotion of tenderness and gratitude. "And now, *mon cher*, what day will you dine with me to meet Raoul and Enguerrand, and some others whom you would like to know?"

"Thanks, and hearty ones, but we move now in different spheres, and I shall not trespass on yours. *Je suis trop bourgeois* to incur the ridicule of *le bourgeois gentilhomme*."

"Frederic, how dare you speak thus? My dear fellow, my friends shall honor you as I do."

"But that will be on your account, not mine. No; honestly, that kind of society neither tempts nor suits me. I am a sort of king in my own walk, and I prefer my Bohemian royalty to vassalage in higher regions. Say no more of it. It will flatter my vanity enough if you will now and then descend to my coteries, and allow me to parade a Rochebriant as my familiar crony, slap him on the shoulder, and call him Alain."

"Fie, you who stopped me and the English aristocrat in the Champs Elysées, to humble us with your boast of having fascinated *une grande dame*—I think you said a *duchesse*."

"Oh," said Lemercier, conceitedly, and passing his hand through his scented locks, "women are different; love levels all ranks. I don't blame Ruy Blas for accepting the love of a queen, but I do blame him for passing himself off as a noble—a plagiarism, by-the-by,

from an English play. I do not love the English enough to copy them. *Apropos*, what has become of *ce beau* Grarm Varn? I have not seen him of late."

"Neither have I."

"Nor the *belle Italienne?*"

"Nor her," said Alain, slightly blushing.

At this moment Enguerrand lounged into the room. Alain stopped Lemercier to introduce him to his kinsman. "Enguerrand, I present to you M. Lemercier, my earliest and one of my dearest friends."

The young noble held out his hand with the bright and joyous grace which accompanied all his movements, and expressed in cordial words his delight to make M. Lemercier's acquaintaince. Bold and assured as Frederic was in his own circles, he was more discomposed than set at ease by the gracious accost of a *lion*, whom he felt at once to be of a breed superior to his own. He muttered some confused phrases, in which *ravi* and *flatté* were alone audible, and evanished.

"I know M. Lemercier by sight very well," said Enguerrand, seating himself. "One sees him very often in the Bois; and I have met him in the *Coulisses* and the *Bal Mabille*. I think, too, that he plays at the Bourse, and is *lié* with M. Duplessis, who bids fair to rival Louvier one of these days. Is Duplessis also one of your dearest friends?"

"No, indeed. I once met him, and was not prepossessed in his favor."

Nevertheless, he is a man much to be admired and respected."

"Why so?"

"Because he understands so well the art of making what we all covet—money. I will introduce you to him."

"I have been already introduced."

"Then I will re-introduce you. He is much courted in a society which I have recently been permitted by my father to frequent—the society of the Imperial Court."

"You frequent that society, and the Count permits it?"

"Yes, better the Imperialists than the Republicans; and my father begins to own that truth, though he is too old or too indolent to act on it."

"And Raoul?"

"Oh, Raoul, the melancholy and philosophical Raoul, has no ambition of any kind, so long as—thanks somewhat to me—his purse is always replenished for the wants of his stately existence, among the foremost of which wants are the means to supply the wants of others. That is the true reason why he consents to our glove-shop. Raoul belongs, with some other young men of the faubourg, to a society enrolled under the name of Saint François de Sales, for the relief of the poor. He visits their houses, and is at home by their sick-beds as at their stinted boards. Nor does he confine his visitations to the limits of our faubourg; he extends his travels to Montmartre and Belleville. As to our upper world, he does not concern himself much with its changes. He says that 'we have destroyed too much ever to rebuild solidly; and that whatever we do build could be upset any day by a Paris mob, which he declares to be the only institution we have left.' A wonderful fellow is Raoul; full of mind, though he does little with it; full of heart, which he devotes to suffering humanity, and to a poetic, knightly reverence (not to be confounded with earthly love, and not to be degraded into that sickly sentiment called Platonic affection) for the Comtesse di Rimini, who is six years older than himself, and who is very faithfully attached to her husband, Raoul's intimate friend, whose honor he would guard as his own.

"It is an episode in the drama of Parisian life, and one not so uncommon as the malignant may suppose. Di Rimini knows and approves of his veneration; my mother, the best of women, sanctions it, and deems truly that it preserves Raoul safe from all the temptations to which ignobler youth is exposed. I mention this lest you should imagine there was anything in Raoul's worship of his star less pure than it is. For the rest, Raoul, to the grief and amazement of that disciple of Voltaire, my respected father, is one of the very few men I know in our circles who is sincerely religious—an orthodox Catholic—and the only man I know who practises the religion he professes; charitable, chaste, benevolent; and no bigot, no intolerant ascetic. His only weakness is his entire submission to the worldly common-sense of his good-for-nothing, covetous, ambitious brother Enguerrand. I cannot say how I love him for that. If he had not such a weakness, his excellence would gall me, and I believe I should hate him."

Alain bowed his head at this eulogium. Such had been the character that, a few months ago, he would have sought as example and model. He seemed to gaze upon a flattered portrait of himself as he had been.

"But," said Enguerrand, "I have not come here to indulge in the overflow of brotherly affection. I come to take you to your relation the Duchess of Tarascon. I have pledged myself to her to bring you, and she is at home on purpose to receive you."

"In that case I cannot be such a churl as to refuse. And, indeed, I no longer feel quite the same prejudices against her and the Imperialists as I brought from Bretagne. Shall I order my carriage?"

"No; mine is at the door. Yours can meet you where you will, later. *Allons.*"

CHAPTER III.

The Duchesse de Tarascon occupied a vast apartment in the Rue Royale, close to the Tuileries. She held a high post among the ladies who graced the brilliant Court of the Empress. She had survived her second husband the Duc, who left no issue, and the title died with him. Alain and Enguerrand were ushered up the grand stair-case, lined with tiers of costly exotics as if for a *fête;* but in that and in all kinds of female luxury, the Duchesse lived in a state of *fête perpétuelle.* The doors on the landing-place were screened by the heavy *portières* of Genoa velvet, richly embroidered in gold with the ducal crown and cipher. The two *salons* through which the visitors passed to the private cabinet or boudoir were decorated with Gobelin tapestries, fresh, with a mixture of roseate hues, and depicting incidents in the career of the first Emperor: while the effigies of the late Duc's father—the gallant founder of a short-lived race—figured modestly in the back-ground. On a table of Russian malachite within the recess of the central figure lay, preserved in glass cases, the baton and the sword, the epaulettes, and the decorations of the brave Marshal. On the *consoles* and the mantelpieces stood clocks and vases of Sèvres that could scarcely be eclipsed by those in the Imperial palaces. Entering the cabinet, they found the Duchesse seated at her writing-table, with a small Skye terrier, hideous in the beauty of the purest breed, nestled at her feet. This room was an exquisite combination of costliness and comfort—Luxury at home. The hangings were of geranium-colored silk, with double curtains of white satin; near to the writing-table a conservatory, with a white marble fountain at play in the centre, and a trellised aviary at the back. The walls were covered with small pictures—chiefly portraits and miniatures of the members of the Imperial family, of the late Duc, of his father the Marshal and Madame la Maréchale, of the present Duchesse herself, and of some of the principal ladies of the Court.

The Duchesse was still in the prime of life. She had passed her fortieth year, but was so well "conserved" that you might have guessed her to be ten years younger. She was tall; not large—but with rounded figure inclined to *embonpoint;* with dark hair and eyes, but fair complexion, injured in effect rather than improved by pearl-powder, and that atrocious barbarism of a dark stain on the eyelids which has of late years been a baneful fashion; dressed—I am a man, and cannot describe her dress—all I know is, that she had the acknowledged fame of the best-dressed *subject* of France. As she rose from her seat there was in her look and air the unmistakable evidence of *grande dame;* a family likeness in feature to Alain himself, a stronger likeness to the picture of her first cousin—his mother—which was preserved at Rochebriant. Her descent was indeed from ancient and noble houses. But to the distinction of race she added that of fashion; crowning both with a tranquil consciousness of lofty position and unblemished reputation.

"Unnatural cousin," she said to Alain, offering her hand to him, with a gracious smile; "all this age in Paris, and I see you for the first time. But there is joy on earth as in heaven over sinners who truly repent. You repent truly—*n'est ce pas?*"

It is impossible to describe the caressing charm which the Duchesse threw into her words, voice, and look. Alain was fascinated and subdued.

"Ah, Madame la Duchesse," said he, bowing over the fair hand he lightly held, "it was not sin, unless modesty be a sin, which made

a rustic hesitate long before he dared to offer his homage to the queen of the graces."

"Not badly said for a rustic," cried Enguerrand; "eh, Madame?"

"My cousin, you are pardoned," said the Duchesse. "Compliment is the perfume of *gentilhommerie;* and if you brought enough of that perfume from the flowers of Rochebriant to distribute among the ladies at Court, you will be terribly the *mode* there. Seducer!"—here she gave the Marquis a playful tap on the cheek, not in a coquettish but in a mother-like familiarity, and looking at him attentively, said: "Why, you are even handsomer than your father. I shall be proud to present to their Imperial Majesties so becoming a cousin. But seat yourselves here, Messieurs, close to my arm-chair, *causons.*"

The Duchesse then took up the ball of the conversation. She talked without any apparent artifice, but with admirable tact; put just the questions about Rochebriant most calculated to please Alain, shunning all that might have pained him; asking him for descriptions of the surrounding scenery — the Breton legends; hoping that the old castle would never be spoiled by modernizing restorations; inquiring tenderly after his aunt, whom she had in her childhood once seen, and still remembered with her sweet, grave face; paused little for replies; then turned to Enguerrand with sprightly small-talk on the topics of the day, and every now and then bringing Alain into the pale of the talk, leading on insensibly until she got Enguerrand himself to introduce the subject of the Emperor and the political troubles which were darkening a reign heretofore so prosperous and splendid.

Her countenance then changed; it became serious and even grave in its expression.

"It is true," she said, "that the times grow menacing—menacing not only to the throne, but to order and property and France. One by one they are removing all the breakwaters which the Empire had constructed between the executive and the most fickle and impulsive population that ever shouted 'long live' one day to the man whom they would send to the guillotine the next. They are denouncing what they call personal government; grant that it has its evils; but what would they substitute?—a constitutional monarchy like the English? That is impossible with universal suffrage and without an hereditary chamber. The nearest approach to it was the monarchy of Louis Phillippe—we know how sick they became of that. A republic? *non Dieu!* composed of republicans terrified out of their wits at each other. The moderate men, mimics of the Girondins, with the Reds, and the Socialists, and the Communists, ready to tear them to pieces. And then—what then?—the commercialists, the agriculturists, the middle class combining to elect some dictator who will cannonade the mob, and become a mimic Napoléon, gratified on a mimic Necker or a mimic Danton, Oh, Messieurs, I am French to the core! You inheritors of such names must be as French as I am; and yet you men insist on remaining more useless to France in the midst of her need than I am,—I, a woman who can but talk and weep."

The Duchess spoke with a warmth of emotion which startled and profoundly affected Alain. He remained silent, leaving it to Enguerrand to answer.

"Dear Madame," said the latter, "I do not see how either myself or our kinsman can merit your reproach. We are not legislators. I doubt if there is a single department in France that would elect us, if we offered ourselves. It is not our fault if the various floods of revolution leave men of our birth and opinions stranded wrecks of a perished world. The Emperor chooses his own advisers, and if they are bad ones, his Majesty certainly will not ask Alain and me to replace them."

"You do not answer—you evade me," said the Duchesse, with a mournful smile. "You are too skilled a man of the world, M. Enguerrand, not to know that it is not only legislators and ministers that are necessary to the support of a throne, and the safeguard of a nation. Do you not see how great a help it is to both throne and nation, when that section of public opinion which is represented by names illustrious in history, identified with records of chivalrous deeds and loyal devotion, rallies round the order established? Let that section of public opinion stand aloof, soured and discontented, excluded from active life, lending no counterbalance to the perilous oscillations of democratic passion, and tell me if it is not an enemy to itself as well as a traitor to the principles it embodies?"

"The principles it embodies, Madame," said

Alain, "are those of fidelity to a race of kings unjustly set aside, less for the vices than the virtues of ancestors. Louis XV. was the worst of the Bourbons,—he was the *bien aimé*,—he escapes; Louis XVI. was in moral attributes the best of the Bourbons,—he dies the death of a felon; Louis XVIII., against whom much may be said, restored to the throne by foreign bayonets, reigning as a disciple of Voltaire might reign, secretly scoffing alike at the royalty and the religion which were crowned in his person, dies peacefully in his bed; Charles X., redeeming the errors of his youth by a reign untarnished by a vice, by a religion earnest and sincere, is sent into exile for defending established order from the very inroads which you lament. He leaves an heir against whom calumny cannot invent a tale, and that heir remains an outlaw simply because he descends from Henry IV., and has a right to reign. Madame, you appeal to us as among the representatives of the chivalrous deeds and loyal devotion which characterized the old nobility of France. Should we deserve that character if we forsook the unfortunate, and gained wealth and honor in forsaking?"

"Your words endear you to me. I am proud to call you cousin," said the Duchesse. "But do you, or does any man in his senses, believe that if you upset the Empire you could get back the Bourbons? that you would not be in imminent danger of a Government infinitely more opposed to the theories on which rests the creed of Legitimists than that of Louis Napoléon? After all, what is there in the loyalty of you Bourbonites that has in it the solid worth of an argument which can appeal to the comprehension of mankind, except it be the principle of an hereditary monarchy? Nobody now-a-days can maintain the right divine of a single regal family to impose itself upon a nation. That dogma has ceased to be a living principle; it is only a dead reminiscence. But the institution of monarchy is a principle strong and vital, and appealing to the practical interests of vast sections of society. Would you sacrifice the principle which concerns the welfare of millions, because you cannot embody it in the person of an individual utterly insignificant in himself? In a word, if you prefer monarchy to the hazard of republicanism for such a country as France, accept the monarchy you find, since it is quite clear you cannot rebuild the monarchy you would prefer. Does it not embrace all the great objects for which you call yourself Legitimist? Under it religion is honored, a national faith secured, in reality if not in name; under it you have united the votes of millions to the establishment of the throne; under it all the material interests of the country, commercial, agricultural, have advanced with an unequalled rapidity of progress; under it Paris has become the wonder of the world for riches, for splendor, for grace and beauty; under it the old traditional enemies of France have been humbled and rendered impotent.

"The policy of Richelieu has been achieved in the abasement of Austria; the policy of Napoléon I. has been consummated in the salvation of Europe from the semi-barbarous ambition of Russia. England no longer casts her trident in the opposite scale of the balance of European power. Satisfied with the honor of our alliance, she has lost every other ally; and her forces neglected, her spirit enervated, her statesmen dreaming believers in the safety of their island, provided they withdraw from the affairs of Europe, may sometimes scold us, but will certainly not dare to fight. With France she is but an inferior satellite,—without France she is—nothing. Add to all this a Court more brilliant than that of Louis XIV., a sovereign not indeed without faults and errors, but singularly mild in his nature, warm-hearted to friends, forgiving to foes, whom personally no one could familiarly know and not be charmed with a *bonté* of character, lovable as that of Henri IV.,—and tell me what more than all this could you expect from the reign of a Bourbon?"

"With such results," said Alain, "from the monarchy you so eloquently praise, I fail to discover what the Emperor's throne could possibly gain by a few powerless converts from an unpopular, and you say, no doubt truly, from a hopeless cause."

"I say monarchy gains much by the loyal adhesion of any man of courage, ability, and honor. Every new monarchy gains much by conversions from the ranks by which the older monarchies were strengthened and adorned. But I do not here invoke your aid merely to this monarchy, my cousin; I demand your devotion to the interests of France; I demand

that you should not rest an outlaw from her service. Ah, you think that France is in no danger—that you may desert or oppose the Empire as you list, and that society will remain safe! You are mistaken. Ask Enguerrand."

"Madame," said Enguerrand, "you overrate my political knowledge in that appeal; but, honestly speaking, I subscribe to your reasonings. I agree with you that the Empire sorely needs the support of men of honor; it has one cause of rot which now undermines it—dishonest jobbery in its administrative departments; even in that of the army, which apparently is so heeded and cared for. I agree with you that France is in danger, and may need the swords of all her better sons, whether against the foreigner or against her worst enemies—the mobs of her great towns. I myself received a military education, and but for my reluctance to separate myself from my father and Raoul, I should be a candidate for employments more congenial to me than those of the Bourse and my trade in the glove-shop. But Alain is happily free from all family ties, and Alain knows that my advice to him is not hostile to your exhortations."

I am glad to think he is under so salutary an influence," said the Duchesse; and seeing that Alain remained silent and thoughtful, she wisely changed the subject, and shortly afterwards the two friends took leave.

CHAPTER IV.

THREE days elapsed before Graham again saw M. Lebeau. The letter-writer did not show himself at the *café*, and was not to be found at his office, the ordinary business of which was transacted by his clerk, saying that his master was much engaged on important matters that took him from home.

Graham naturally thought that these matters concerned the discovery of Louise Duval, and was reconciled to suspense. At the *café*, awaiting Lebeau, he had slid into some acquaintance with the *ouvrier* Armand Monnier, whose face and talk had before excited his interest. Indeed, the acquaintance had been commenced by the *ouvrier*, who seated himself at a table near to Graham's, and, after looking at him earnestly for some minutes, said, "You are waiting for your antagonist at dominoes, M. Lebeau—a very remarkable man."

"So he seems. I know, however, but little of him. You, perhaps, have known him longer?"

"Several months. Many of your countrymen frequent this *café*, but you do not seem to care to associate with the *blouses*."

"It is not that; but we islanders are shy, and don't make acquaintance with each other readily. By the way, since you so courteously accost me, I may take the liberty of saying that I overheard you defend the other night, against one of my countrymen, who seemed to me to talk great nonsense, the existence of *le bon Dieu*. You had much the best of it. I rather gathered from your argument that you went somewhat farther, and were not too enlightened to admit of Christianity.

Armand Monnier looked pleased—he liked praise; and he liked to hear himself talk, and he plunged at once into a very complicated sort of Christianity—partly Arian, partly St. Simonian, with a little of Rousseau and a great deal of Armand Monnier. Into this we need not follow him; but, in sum, it was a sort of Christianity, the main heads of which consisted in the removal of your neighbor's landmarks—in the right of the poor to appropriate the property of the rich—in the right of love to dispense with marriage, and the duty of the State to provide for any children that might result from such union, the parents being incapacitated to do so, as whatever they might leave was due to the treasury in common. Graham listened to these doctrines with melancholy not unmixed with contempt. "Are these opinions of yours," he asked, "derived from reading or your own reflection?"

"Well, from both, but from circumstances in life that induced me to read and reflect. I one of the many victims of the tyrannical law of marriage. When very young I married a woman who made me miserable, and then forsook me. Morally, she has ceased to be my wife—legally, she is. I then met with another woman who suits me, who loves me. She lives with me; I cannot marry her; she has to submit to humiliations, to be called contemptuously an *ouvrier's* mistress. Then, though before I was only a Republican, I felt there was something wrong in society which

needed a greater change than that of a merely political government; and then, too, when I was all troubled and sore, I chanced to read one of Madame de Grantmesnil's books. A glorious genius that woman's!"

"She has genius, certainly," said Graham, with a keen pang at his heart; Madame de Grantmesnil, the dearest friend of Isaura! "But," he added, "though I believe that eloquent author has indirectly assailed certain social institutions, including that of marriage. I am perfectly persuaded that she never designed to effect such complete overthrow of the system which all civilized communities have hitherto held in reverence, as your doctrines would attempt; and after all, she but expresses her ideas through the medium of fabulous incidents and characters. And men of your sense should not look for a creed in the fictions of poets and romance-writers."

"Ah," said Monnier, "I dare say neither Madame de Grantmesnil nor even Rousseau ever even guessed the ideas they awoke in their readers; but one idea leads us to another. And genuine poetry and romance touch the heart so much more than dry treatises. In a word, Madame de Grautmesnil's book set me thinking; and then I read other books, and talked with clever men, and educated myself. And so I became the man I am." Here, with a self-satisfied air, Monnier bowed to the Englishman, and joined a group at the other end of the room.

The next evening, just before dusk, Graham Vane was seated musingly in his own apartment in the Faubourg Montmartre, when there came a slight knock at his door. He was so rapt in thought that he did not hear the sound, though twice repeated. The door opened gently, and M. Lebeau appeared on the threshold. The room was lighted only by the gas-lamp from the street without.

Lebeau advanced through the gloom, and quietly seated himself in the corner of the fire-place opposite to Graham before he spoke. "A thousand pardons for disturbing your slumbers, M. Lamb."

Startled then by the voice so near him, Graham raised his head, looked round, and beheld very indistinctly the person seated so near him.

"M. Lebeau?"

"At your service. I promised to give an answer to your question: accept my apologies that it has been deferred so long. I shall not this evening go to our *café;* I took the liberty of calling——"

"M. Lebeau, you are a brick."

"A what, Monsieur!—a *brique?*"

"I forgot—you are not up to our fashionable London idioms. A brick means a jolly fellow, and it is very kind in you to call. What is your decision?"

"Monsieur, I can give you some information, but it is so slight that I offer it gratis, and forego all thought of undertaking farther inquiries. They could only be prosecuted in another country, and it would not be worth my while to leave Paris on the chance of gaining so trifling a reward as you propose. Judge for yourself. In the year 1849, and in the month of July, Louise Duval left Paris for Aix-la Chapelle. There she remained some weeks, and then left it. I can learn no farther traces of her movements."

"Aix-la-Chapelle!—what could she do there?"

"It is a Spa in great request; crowded during the summer season with visitors from all countries. She might have gone there for health or for pleasure."

"Do you think that one could learn more at the Spa itself if one went there?"

"Possibly. But it is so long—twenty years ago."

"She might have revisited the place."

"Certainly; but I know no more."

"Was she there under the same name Duval?"

"I am sure of that."

"Do you think she left it alone or with others? You tell me she was awfully *belle*—she might have attracted admirers."

"If," answered Lebeau, reluctantly, "I could believe the report of my informant. Louise Duval left Aix not alone, but with some gallant—not an Englishman. They are said to have parted soon, and the man is now dead. But, speaking frankly, I do not think Mademoiselle Duval would have thus compromised her honor and sacrificed her future. I believe she would have scorned all proposals that were not those of marriage. But, all I can say for certainity is, that nothing is known to me of her fate since she quitted Aix-la-Chapelle."

"In 1849—she had then a child living?"

"A child? I never heard that she had any child; and I do not believe that she could have had any child in 1849."

Graham mused. Somewhat less than five years after 1849 Louise Duval had been seen at Aix-la-Chapelle. Possibly she found some attraction at that place, and might yet be discovered there. "Monsieur Lebeau," said Graham, "you know this lady by sight; you would recognize her in spite of the lapse of years. Will you go to Aix and find out there what you can? Of course, expenses will be paid, and the reward will be given if you succeed."

"I cannot oblige you. My interest in this poor lady is not very strong, though I should be willing to serve her, and glad to know that she were alive. I have now business on hand which interests me much more, and which will take me from Paris, but not in the direction of Aix."

"If I wrote to my employer, and got him to raise the reward to some higher amount, that might make it worth your while?"

"I should still answer that my affairs will not permit such a journey. But if there be any chance of tracing Louise Duval to Aix—and there may be—you would succeed quite as well as I should. You must judge for yourself if it be worth your trouble to attempt such a task; and if you do attempt it, and do succeed, pray let me know. A line to my office will reach me for some little time, even if I am absent from Paris. Adieu, M. Lamb."

Here M. Lebeau rose and departed.

Graham relapsed into thought; but a train of thought much more active, much more concentred than before. "No,"—thus ran his meditations; "no, it would not be safe to employ that man further. The reasons that forbid me to offer any very high reward for the discovery of this woman operate still more strongly against tendering to her own relation a sum that might indeed secure his aid, but would unquestionably arouse his suspicions, and perhaps drag into light all that must be concealed. Oh this cruel mission! I am, indeed, an impostor to myself till it be fulfilled. I will go to Aix, and take Renard with me. I am impatient till I set out, but I cannot quit Paris without once more seeing Isaura. She consents to relinquish the stage; surely I could wean her too from intimate friendship with a woman whose genius has so fatal an effect upon enthusiastic minds. And then—and then?"

He fell into a delightful reverie; and contemplating Isaura as his future wife, he surrounded her sweet image with all those attributes of dignity and respect with which an Englishman is accustomed to invest the destined bearer of his name, the gentle sovereign of his household, the sacred mother of his children. In this picture the more brilliant qualities of Isaura found, perhaps, but faint presentation. Her glow of sentiment, her play of fancy, her artistic yearnings for truths remote, for the invisible fairyland of beautiful romance, receded into the background of the picture. It was all these, no doubt, that had so strengthened and enriched the love at first sight, which had shaken the equilibrium of his positive existence; and yet he now viewed all these as subordinate to the one image of mild decorous matronage into which wedlock was to transform the child of genius, longing for angel wings and unlimited space.

CHAPTER V.

On quitting the sorry apartment of the false M. Lamb, Lebeau walked on with slow steps and bended head, like a man absorbed in thought. He threaded a labyrinth of obscure streets, no longer in the Faubourg Montmartre, and dived at last into one of the few courts which preserve the *cachet* of the *moyen âge* untouched by the ruthless spirit of improvement which, during the Second Empire, has so altered the face of Paris. At the bottom of the court stood a large house, much dilapidated, but bearing the trace of former grandeur in pilasters and fretwork in the style of the *Renaissance*, and a defaced coat-of arms, surmounted with a ducal coronet, over the doorway. The house had the aspect of desertion: many of the windows were broken; others were jealously closed with mouldering shutters. The door stood ajar; Lebeau pushed it open, and the action set in movement a bell within a porter's lodge. The house, then, was not uninhabited; it retained the dignity of a *concierge*. A man with a large grizzled beard cut square, and holding a journal in his hand,

emerged from the lodge, and moved his cap with a certain bluff and surly reverence on recognizing Lebeau.

"What! so early, citizen?"

"Is it too early?" said Lebeau, glancing at his watch. "So it is; I was not aware of the time. But I am tired with waiting; let me into the *salon*. I will wait for the rest; I shall not be sorry for a little repose."

"*Bon*," said the porter, sententiously; "while man reposes *men* advance."

"A profound truth, citizen Le Roux; though, if they advance on a reposing foe, they have blundering leaders unless they march through unguarded bypaths and with noiseless tread."

Following the porter up a dingy broad staircase, Lebeau was admitted in a large room, void of all other furniture than a table, two benches at its sides, and a *fauteuil* at its head. On the mantelpiece there was a huge clock, and some iron sconces were fixed on the panelled walls.

Lebeau flung himself, with a wearied air, into the *fauteuil*. The porter looked at him with a kindly expression. He had a liking to Lebeau, whom he had served in his proper profession of messenger or *commissionaire* before being placed by that courteous employer in the easy post he now held. Lebeau, indeed, had the art, when he pleased, of charming inferiors; his knowledge of mankind allowed him to distinguish peculiarities in each individual, and flatter the *amour propre* by deference to such eccentricities. Marc le Roux, the roughest of "red caps," had a wife of whom he was very proud. He would have called the Empress *Citoyenne Eugénie*, but he always spoke of his wife as Madame. Lebeau won his heart by always asking after Madame.

"You look tired, citizen," said the porter; "let me bring you a glass of wine."

"Thank you, *mon ami*, no. Perhaps later, if I have time, after we break up to pay my respects to Madame."

The porter smiled, bowed, and retired muttering, "*Non d'um petit bonhomme—il n'y a rien de tel que les belles manières.*"

Left alone, Lebeau leaned his elbow on the table, resting his chin on his hand, and gazing into the dim space—for it was now, indeed, night, and little light came through the grimy panes of the one window left unclosed by shutters. He was musing deeply. This man was, in much, an enigma to himself. Was he seeking to unriddle it? A strange compound of contradictory elements. In his stormy youth there had been lightning-like flashes of good instincts, of irregular honor, of inconsistent generosity—a puissant wild nature—with strong passions of love and of hate, without fear, but not without shame. In other forms of society that love of applause which has made him seek and exult in the notoriety which he mistook for fame, might have settled down into some solid and useful ambition. He might have become great in the world's eye, for at the service of his desires there were no ordinary talents. Though too true a Parisian to be a severe student, still, on the whole, he had acquired much general information, partly from books, partly from varied commerce with mankind. He had the gift, both by tongue and by pen, of expressing himself with force and warmth—time and necessity had improved that gift. Coveting, during his brief career of fashion, the distinctions which necessitate lavish expenditure, he had been the most reckless of spendthrifts, but the neediness which follows waste had never destroyed his original sense of personal honor. Certainly, Victor de Mauléon was not, at the date of his fall, a man to whom the thought of accepting, much less of stealing, the jewels of a woman who loved him, could have occurred as a possible question of casuistry between honor and temptation. Nor could that sort of question have, throughout the sternest trials or the humblest callings to which his after-life had been subjected, forced admission into his brain.

He was one of those men, perhaps the most terrible though unconscious criminals, who are the offsprings produced by intellectual power and egotistical ambition. If you had offered to Victor de Mauléon the crown of the Cæsars, on condition of his doing one of those base things which "a gentleman" cannot do —pick a pocket cheat at cards — Victor de Mauléon would have refused the crown. He would not have refused on account of any laws of morality affecting the foundations of the social system, but from the pride of his own personality. "I, Victor de Mauléon! I pick a pocket! I cheat at cards! I!" But when something incalculably worse for the interests of society than picking a pocket or cheating at

cards was concerned; when, for the sake either of private ambition or political experiment hitherto untested, and therefore very doubtful, the peace and order and happiness of millions might be exposed to the release of the most savage passions — rushing on revolutionary madness or civil massacre—then this French daredevil would have been just as unscrupulous as any English philosopher whom a metropolitan borough might elect as its representative. The system of the Empire was in the way of Victor de Mauléon—in the way of his private ambition, in the way of his political dogmas—and therefore it must be destroyed, no matter what nor whom it crushed beneath its ruins.

He was one of those plotters of revolutions not uncommon in democracies, ancient and modern, who invoke popular agencies with the less scruple because they have a supreme contempt for the populace. A man with mental powers equal to De Mauléon's, and who sincerely loves the people and respects the grandeur of aspiration with which, in the great upheaving of their masses, they so often contrast the irrational credulities of their ignorance and the blind fury of their wrath, is always exceedingly loth to pass the terrible gulf that divides reform from revolution. He knows how rarely it happens that genuine liberty is not disarmed in the passage, and what sufferings must be undergone by those who live by their labor during the dismal intervals between the sudden destruction of one form of society and the gradual settlement of another. Such a man, however, has no type in a Victor de Mauléon. The circumstances of his life had placed this strong nature at war with society, and corrupted into misanthropy affections that had once been ardent. That misanthropy made his ambition more intense, because it increased his scorn for the human instruments it employed.

Victor de Mauléon knew that, however innocent of the charges that had so long darkened his name, and however—thanks to his rank, his manners, his *savoir vivre*—the aid of Louvier's countenance, and the support of his own high-born connections—he might restore himself to his rightful grade in private life, the higher prizes in public life would scarcely be within reach, to a man of his antecedents and stinted means, in the existent form and conditions of established political order. Perforce, the aristocrat must make himself democrat if he would become a political chief. Could he assist in turning upside down the actual state of things, he trusted to his individual force of character to find himself among the uppermost in the general *bouleversement*. And in the first stage of popular revolution the mob has no greater darling than the noble who deserts his order, though in the second stage it may guillotine him at the denunciation of his cobbler. A mind so sanguine and so audacious as that of Victor de Mauléon never thinks of the second step if it sees a way to the first.

CHAPTER VI.

The room was in complete darkness save where a ray from a gas-lamp at the mouth of the court came a slant through the window, when citizen Le Roux re-entered, closed the window, lighted two of the sconces, and drew forth from a drawer in the table implements of writing, which he placed thereon noiselessly, as if he feared to disturb M. Lebeau, whose head, buried in his hands, rested on the table. He seemed in a profound sleep. At last the porter gently touched the arm of the slumberer, and whispered in his ear, "It is on the stroke of ten, citizen; they will be here in a minute or so."

Lebeau lifted his head drowsily.

"Eh," said he—"what?"

"You have been asleep."

"I suppose so, for I have been dreaming. Ha! I hear the door-bell. I am wide awake now."

The porter left him, and in a few minutes conducted into the *salon* two men wrapped in cloaks, despite the warmth of the summer night. Lebeau shook hands with them silently, and not less silently they laid aside their cloaks and seated themselves. Both these men appeared to belong to the upper section of the middle class. One, strongly built, with a keen expression of countenance, was a surgeon, considered able in his profession, but with limited practice, owing to a current suspicion against his honor in connection with a forged will. The other, tall, meagre, with long grizzled hair and a wild unsettled look

about the eyes, was a man of science; had written works well esteemed upon mathematics and electricity, also against the existence of any other creative power than that which he called "nebulosity," and defined to be the combination of heat and moisture. The surgeon was about the age of forty, the atheist a few years older. In another minute or so, a knock was heard against the wall. One of the men rose and touched a spring in the panel, which then flew back, and showed an opening upon a narrow stair, by which, one after the other, entered three other members of the society. Evidently there was more than one mode of ingress and exit.

The three new-comers were not Frenchmen one might see that at a glance; probably they had reasons for greater precaution than those who entered by the front door. One, a tall, powerfully-built man, with fair hair and beard, dressed with a certain pretension to elegance—faded threadbare elegance—exhibiting no appearance of linen, was a Pole. One, a slight bald man, very dark and sallow—was an Italian. The third, who seemed like an *ouvrier* in his holiday clothes, was a Belgian.

Lebeau greeted them all with an qual courtesy, and each with an equal silence took his seat at the table.

Lebeau glanced at the clock. "*Confrères*," he said, "our number, as fixed for this *séance*, still needs two to be complete, and doubtless they will arrive in a few minutes. Till they come, we can but talk upon trifles. Permit me to offer you my cigar-case." And so saying, he who professed to be no smoker, handed his next neighbor, who was the Pole, a large cigar-case amply furnished; and the Pole, helping himself to two cigars, handed the case to the man next him—two only declining the luxury, the Italian and the Belgian. But the Pole was the only man who took two cigars.

Steps were now heard on the stairs, the door opened, and citizen Le Roux ushered in, one after the other, two men, this time unmistakably French—to an experienced eye unmistakably Parisians: the one a young beardless man, who seemed almost boyish, with a beautiful face, and a stinted, meagre frame; the other a stalwart man of about eight-and-twenty, dressed partly as an *ouvrier*, not in his Sunday clothes, rather affecting the *blouse*—not that he wore that antique garment, but that he was in rough costume unbrushed and stained, with thick shoes and coarse stockings, and a workman's cap. But of all who gathered round the table at which M. Lebeau presided, he had the most distinguished exterior. A virile honest exterior, a massive open forehead, intelligent eyes, a handsome clear-cut incisive profile, and solid jaw. The expression of the face was stern, but not mean—an expression which might have become an ancient baron as well as a modern workman—in it plenty of haughtiness and of will, and still more of self-esteem.

"*Confrères*," said Lebeau, rising and every eye turned to him, "our number for the present *séance* is complete. To business. Since we last met, our cause has advanced with rapid and not with noiseless stride. I need not tell you that Louis Bonaparte has virtually abnegated *Les idées Napoléoniennes*—a fatal mistake for him, a glorious advance for us. The liberty of the press must very shortly be achieved, and with it personal government must end. When the autocrat once is compelled to go by the advice of his Ministers, look for sudden changes. His Ministers will be but weathercocks, turned hither and thither according as the wind chops at Paris; and Paris is the temple of the winds. The new revolution is almost at hand." (Murmurs of applause). "It would move the laughter of the Tuileries and its Ministers, of the Bourse and of its gamblers, of every dainty *salon* of this silken city of would-be philosophers and wits, if they were told that here within this mouldering *baraque*, eight men, so little blest by fortune, so little known to fame as ourselves, met to concert the fall of an empire. The Government would not deem us important enough to notice our existence."

"I know not that," interrupted the Pole.

"Ah, pardon," resumed the orator; "I should have confined my remark to the *five* of us who are French. I did injustice to the illustrious antecedents of our foreign allies. I know that you, Thadeus Loubisky—that you, Leonardo Raselli—have been too eminent for hands hostile to tyrants not to be marked with a black cross in the books of the police. I know that you, Jan Vanderstegen, if hitherto unscarred by those wounds in defence of freedom which despots and cowards would fain miscall the brands of the felon, still owe it to

your special fraternity to keep your movements rigidly concealed. The tyrant would suppress the International Society, and forbids it the liberty of congress. To you three is granted the secret entrance to our council-hall. But we Frenchmen are as yet safe in our supposed insignificance. *Confrères*, permit me to impress on you the causes why, insignificant as we seem, we are really formidable. In the first place, we are few: the great mistake in most secret associations has been, to admit many councillors; and disunion enters wherever many tongues can wrangle. In the next place, though so few in council, we are legion when the time comes for action; because we are representative men, each of his own section, and each section is capable of an indefinite expansion.

"You, valiant Pole—you, politic Italian—enjoy the confidence of thousands now latent in unwatched homes and harmless callings, but who, when you lift a finger, will, like the buried dragon's teeth, spring up into armed men. You, Jan Vanderstegen, the trusted delegate from Verviers, that swarming camp of wronged labor in its revolt from the iniquities of capital—you, when the hour arrives, can touch the wire that flashes the telegram 'Arise' though all the lands in which workmen combine against their oppressors.

"Of us five Frenchmen, let me speak more modestly. You—sage and scholar—Felix Ruvigny, honored alike for the profundity of your science and the probity of your manners, induced to join us by your abhorrence of priest-craft and superstition,—you have a wide connection among all the enlightened reasoners who would emancipate the mind of man from the trammels of Church-born fable—and when the hour arrives in which it is safe to say, '*Delenda est Roma*,' you know where to find the pens that are more victorious than swords against a Church and a Creed. You" (turning to the surgeon)—"you, Gaspard le Noy, whom a vile calumny has robbed of the throne in your profession, so justly due to your skill—you, nobly scorning the rich and great, have devoted yourself to tend and heal the humble and the penniless, so that you have won the popular title of the '*Médecin des Pauvres*,'—when the time comes wherein soldiers shall fly before the *sansculottes*, and the mob shall begin the work which they who move mobs will complete, the clients of Gaspard le Noy will be the avengers of his wrongs.

"You, Armand Monnier, simple *ouvrier*, but of illustrious parentage, for your grandsire was the beloved friend of the virtuous Robespierre, your father perished a hero and a martyr in the massacre of the *coup d'état*—you, cultured in the eloquence of Robespierre himself, and in the persuasive philosophy of Robespierre's teacher, Rousseau—you, the idolized orator of the Red Republicans,—you will be indeed a chief of dauntless bands when the trumpet sounds for battle. Young publicist and poet, Gustave Rameau—I care not which you are at present, I know what you will be soon—you need nothing for the development of your powers over the many but an organ for their manifestation. Of that anon. I now descend into the pathos of egotism. I am compelled lastly to speak of myself. It was at Marseilles and Lyons, as you already know, that I first conceived the plan of this representative association. For years before I had been in familiar intercourse with the friends of freedom—that is, with the foes of the Empire. They are not all poor; some few are rich and generous. I do not say these rich and few concur in the ultimate objects of the poor and many; but they concur in the first object, the demolition of that which exists—the Empire. In the course of my special call of negotiator or agent in the towns of the *Midi*, I formed friendships with some of these prosperous malcontents And out of these friendships I conceived the idea which is embodied in this council."

"According to that conception, while the council may communicate as it will with all societies, secret or open, having revolution for their object, the council refuses to merge itself in any other confederation: it stands aloof and independent, it declines to admit into its code any special articles of faith in a future beyond the bounds to which it limits its design and its force. That design unites us; to go beyond would divide. We all agree to destroy the Napoleonic dynasty; none of us might agree as to what we should place in its stead. All of us here present might say 'A republic.' Ay, but of what kind? Vanderstegen would have it socialistic; Monnier goes further, and would have it communistic, on the principles of Fourier; Le Noy adheres to the policy of Danton, and would commence the republic by a

reign of terror; our Italian ally abhors the notion of general massacre, and advocates individual assassination. Ruvigny would annihilate the worship of a Deity; Monnier holds with Voltaire and Robespeirre, that, 'if there were no Deity, it would be necessary to man to create one.' *Bref*, we could not agree upon any plan for the new edifice, and therefore we refuse to discuss one till the ploughshare has gone over the ruins of the old. But I have another and more practical reason for keeping our council distinct from all societies with professed objects beyond that of demolition. We need a certain command of money. It is I who bring to you that, and—how? Not from my own resources; they but suffice to support myself. Not by contributions from *ouvriers*, who, as you well know, will subscribe only for their own ends in the victory of workmen over masters. I bring money to you from the coffers of the rich malcontents. Their politics are not those of most present; their politics are what they term moderate.

"Some are indeed for a republic, but for a republic strong in defence of order, in support of property; others—and they are the more numerous and the more rich—for a constitutional monarchy, and, if possible, for the abridgment of universal suffrage, which, in their eyes, tends only to anarchy in the towns and arbitrary rule under priestly influence in the rural districts. They would not subscribe a *sou* if they thought it went to further the designs, whether of Ruvigny the atheist, or of Monnier, who would enlist the Deity of Rousseau on the side of the *drapeau rouge*—not a *sou* if they knew I had the honor to boast such *confrères* as I see around me. They subscribe, as we concert, for the fall of Bonaparte. The policy I adopt I borrow from the policy of the English Liberals. In England, potent *millionaires*, high-born dukes, devoted Churchmen, belonging to the Liberal party, accept the services of men who look forward to measures which would ruin capital, eradicate aristocracy, and destroy the Church, provided these men combine with them in some immediate step onward against the Tories. They have a proverb which I thus adapt to French localities: if a train passes Fontainbleau on its way to Marseilles, why should I not take it to Fontainbleau because other passengers are going on to Marseilles?

"*Confrères*, it seems to me the moment has come when we may venture some of the fund placed at my disposal to other purposes than those to which it has been hitherto devoted. I propose, therefore, to set up a journal under the auspices of Gustave Rameau as editor-in-chief—a journal which, if he listen to my advice, will create no small sensation. It will begin with a tone of impartiality: it will refrain from all violence of invective; it will have wit, it will have sentiment and eloquence; it will win its way into the *salons* and *cafés* of educated men: and then, and then, when it does change from polished satire into fierce denunciation and sides with the *blouses*, its effect will be startling and terrific. Of this I will say more to Citizen Rameau in private. To you I need not enlarge upon the fact that, at Paris, a combination of men, though immeasurably superior to us in status or influence, without a journal at command, is nowhere; with such a journal, written not to alarm but to seduce fluctuating opinions, a combination of men immeasurably inferior to us may be anywhere.

"*Confrères*, this affair setted, I proceed to distribute amongst you sums of which each who receives will render me an account, except our valued *confrère* the Pole. All that we can subscribe to the cause of humanity, a representative of Poland requires for himself." (A suppressed laugh among all but the Pole, who looked round with a grave, imposing air, as much as to say, "What is there to laugh at?—a simple truth.")

M. Lebeau then presented to each of his *confrères* a sealed envelope, containing a banknote, and perhaps also private instructions as to its disposal. It was one of his rules to make the amount of any sum granted to an individual member of the society from the fund at his disposal a confidential secret between himself and the recipient. Thus jealousy was avoided if the sums were unequal; and unequal they generally were. In the present instance the two largest sums were given to the *Medecin des Pauvres* and to the delegate from Verviers. Both were no doubt to be distributed among "the poor," at the discretion of the trustee appointed.

Whatever rules with regard to the distribution of money M. Lebeau laid down were acquiesced in without demur, for the money

was found exclusively by himself, and furnished without the pale of the Secret Council, of which he had made himself founder and dictator. Some other business was then discussed, sealed reports from each member were handed to the president, who placed them unopened in his pocket, and resumed—

"*Confrères*," our *séance* is now concluded. The period for our next meeting must remain indefinite, for I myself shall leave Paris as soon as I have set on foot the journal, on the details of which I will confer with Citizen Rameau. I am not satisfied with the progress made by the two travelling missionaries who complete our Council of Ten; and though I do not question their zeal, I think my experience may guide it if I take a journey to the towns of Bordeaux and Marseilles, where they now are. But should circumstances demanding concert of action arise, you may be sure that I will either summon a meeting or transmit instructions to such of our members as may be most usefully employed. For the present, *confrères*, you are relieved. Remain only you, dear young author.

CHAPTER VII.

Left alone with Gustave Rameau, the President of the Secret Council remained silently musing for some moments; but his countenance was no longer moody and overcast—his nostrils were dilated, as in triumph—there was a half-smile of pride on his lips. Rameau watched him curiously and admiringly. The young man had the impressionable, excitable temperament common to Parisian genius—especially when it nourishes itself on absinthe. He enjoyed the romance of belonging to a secret society; he was acute enough to recognize the sagacity by which this small conclave was kept out of those crazed combinations for impracticable theories more likely to lead adventurers to the Tarpeian Rock than to the Capitol; while yet those crazed combinations might, in some critical moment, become strong instruments in the hands of practical ambition. Lebeau fascinated him, and took colossal proportions in his intoxicated vision—vision indeed intoxicated at this moment, for before it floated the realized image of his aspirations,—a journal of which he was to be the editor-in chief—in which his poetry, his prose, should occupy space as large as he pleased—through which his name, hitherto scarce known beyond a literary clique, would resound in *salon*, and club and *café*, and become a familiar music on the lips of fashion. And he owed this to the man seated there—a prodigious man.

"*Cher poète*," said Lebeau, breaking silence, "it gives me no mean pleasure to think I am opening a career to one whose talents fit him for those goals on which they who reach write names that posterity shall read. Struck with certain articles of yours in the journal made celebrated by the wit and gaiety of Savarin, I took pains privately to inquire into your birth, your history, connections, antecedents. All confirmed my first impression, that you were exactly the writer I wish to secure to our cause. I therefore sought you in your rooms, unintroduced and a stranger, in order to express my admiration of your compositions. *Bref*, we soon became friends; and after comparing minds, I admitted you, at your request, into the Secret Council. Now, in proposing to you the conduct of the journal I would establish, for which I am prepared to find all necessary funds, I am compelled to make imperative conditions. Nominally you will be editor-in-chief: that station, if the journal succeeds, will secure your position and fortune; if it fail, you fail with it. But we will not speak of failure; I must have it succeed. Our interest, then, is the same. Before that interest all puerile vanities fade away. Nominally, I say, you are editor-in-chief; but all the real work of editing will, at first, be done by others."

"Ah!" exclaimed Rameau, aghast and stunned. Lebeau resumed—

"To establish the journal I propose needs more than the genius of youth; it needs the tact and experience of mature years."

Rameau sank back on his chair wilh a sullen sneer on his pale lips. Decidedly Lebeau was not so great a man as he had thought.

"A certain portion of the journal," continued Lebeau, "will be exclusively appropriated to your pen."

Rameau's lip lost the sneer.

"But your pen must be therein restricted to compositions of pure fancy, disporting in a world that does not exist; or, if on graver themes connected with the beings of the world

that does exist, the subjects will be dictated to you and revised. Yet even in the higher departments of a journal intended to make way at its first start, we need the aid, not indeed of men who write better than you, but of men whose fame is established—whose writings, good or bad, the public run to read, and will find good even if they are bad. You must consign one column to the playful comments and witticisms of Savarin."

"Savarin? But he has a journal of his own. He will not, as an author, condescend to write in one just set up by me. And as a politician, he as certainly will not aid in an ultra-democratic revolution. If he care for politics at all, he is a constitutionalist, an Orleanist."

"*Enfant!* as an author Savarin will condescend to contribute to your journal, firstly, because it in no way attempts to interfere with his own; secondly—I can tell you a secret—Savarin's journal no longer suffices for his existence; he has sold more than two-thirds of its property; he is in debt, and his creditor is urgent; and to-morrow you will offer Savarin 30,000 francs for one column from his pen, and signed by his name, for two months from the day the journal starts. He will accept, partly because the sum will clear off the debt that hampers him, partly because he will take care that the amount becomes known; and that will help him to command higher terms for the sale of the remaining shares in the journal he now edits, for the new book which you told me he intended to write, and for the new journal which he will be sure to set up as soon as he has disposed of the old one. You say that, as a politician, Savarian, an Orleanist, will not aid in an ultra-democratic revolution. Who asks him to do so? Did I not imply at the meeting that we commence our journal with politics the mildest? Though revolutions are not made with rose-water, it is rose-water that nourishes their roots. The polite cynicism of authors, read by those who float on the surface of society, prepares the way for the social ferment in its deeps. Had there been no Voltaire, there would have been no Camille Desmoulins. Had there been no Diderot, there would have been no Marat. We start as polite cynics. Of all cynics Savarin is the politest. But when I bid high for him, it is his clique that I bid for. Without his clique he is but a wit; with his clique, a power. Partly out of that clique, partly out of a circle beyond it, which Savarin can more or less influence, I select ten.

Here is the list of them; study it. *Entre nous*, I esteem their writings as little as I do artificial flies, but they are the artificial flies at which, in this particular season of the year, the public rise. You must procure at least five of the ten; and I leave you *carte blanche* as to the terms. Savarin gained, the best of them will be proud of being his associates. Observe, none of these *messieurs* of brilliant imagination are to write political articles: those will be furnished to you anonymously, and inserted without erasure or omission. When you have secured Savarin, and five at least of the *collaborateurs* in the list, write to me at my office. I give you four days to do this; and the day the journal starts you enter into the income of 15,000 francs a-year, with a rise in salary proportioned to profits. Are you contented with the terms?"

"Of course I am; but supposing I do not gain the aid of Savarin, or five at least of the list you give, which I see at a glance contains names the most *à la mode* in this kind of writing, more than one of them of high social rank, whom it is difficult for me even to approach—if, I say, I fail?"

"What, with a *carte blanche* of terms? Fie! Are you a Parisian? Well, to answer you frankly, if you fail in so easy a task, you are not the man to edit our journal, and I shall find another. *Allez courage!* Take my advice; see Savarin the first thing to-morrow morning. Of course, my name and calling you will keep a profound secret from him as from all. Say as mysteriously as you can that parties you are forbidden to name instruct you to treat with M. Savarin, and offer him the terms I have specified, the 30,000 francs paid to him in advance the moment he signs the simple memorandum of agreement. The more mysterious you are, the more you will impose—that is, wherever you offer money and don't ask for it."

Here Lebeau took up his hat, and, with a courteous nod of adieu, lightly descended the gloomy stairs.

CHAPTER VIII.

At night, after this final interview with Lebeau, Graham took leave for good of his lodgings in Montmartre, and returned to his apartment in the Rue d'Anjou. He spent several hours of the next morning in answering numerous letters, accumulated during his absence. Late in the afternoon he had an interview with M. Renard, who, as at that season of the year he was not overbusied with other affairs, engaged to obtain leave to place his services at Graham's command during the time requisite for inquiries at Aix, and to be in readiness to start the next day. Graham then went forth to pay one or two farewell visits; and these over, bent his way through the Champs Elysées towards Isaura's villa, when he suddenly encountered Rochebriant on horseback. The Marquis courteously dismounted, committing his horse to the care of the groom, and, linking his arm in Graham's, expressed his pleasure at seeing him again; then, with some visible hesitation and embarrassment, he turned the conversation towards the political aspects of France.

"There was," he said, "much in certain words of yours, when we last walked together in this very path that sank deeply into my mind at the time, and over which I have of late still more earnestly reflected. You spoke of the duties a Frenchman owed to France, and the 'impolicy' of remaining aloof from all public employment on the part of those attached to the Legitimist cause."

"True, it cannot be the policy of any party to forget that between the irrevocable past and the uncertain future there intervenes the action of the present time."

"Should you, as an impartial bystander, consider it dishonorable in me if I entered the military service under the ruling sovereign?"

"Certainly not, if your country needed you."

"And it may, may it not? I hear vague rumors of coming war in almost every *salon* I frequent. There has been gunpowder in the atmosphere we breathe ever since the battle of Sadowa. What think you of German arrogance and ambition? Will they suffer the swords of France to rust in their scabbards?"

"M dear Marquis, I should incline to put the question otherwise. Will the jealous *amour propre* of France permit the swords of Germany to remain sheathed? But in either case, no politician can see without grave apprehension two nations so war-like, close to each other, divided by a border-land that one covets and the other will not yield, each armed to the teeth; the one resolved to brook no rival, the other equally determined to resist all aggression. And therefore, as you say, war is in the atmosphere; and we may also hear, in the clouds that give no sign of dispersion, the growl of the gathering thunder. War may come any day; and if France be not at once the victor——"

"France not at once the victor?" interrupted Alain, passionately; "and against a Prussian! Permit me to say no Frenchman can believe that."

"Let no man despise a foe," said Graham, smiling half sadly. "However, I must not incur the danger of wounding your national susceptibilities. To return to the point you raise. If France needed the aid of her best and bravest, a true descendant of Henri Quatre ought to blush for his ancient *noblesse* were a Rochebriant to say, 'But I don't like the color of the flag.'"

"Thank you," said Alain, simply; "that is enough." There was a pause, the young men walking on slowly, arm in arm. And then there flashed across Graham's mind the recollection of talk on another subject in that very path. Here he had spoken to Alain in deprecation of any possible alliance with Isaura Cicogna, the destined actress and public singer. His cheek flushed; his heart smote him. What! had he spoken slightingly of her—of *her?* What—if she became his own wife? What! had he himself failed in the respect which he would demand as her right from the loftiest of his high-born kindred? What, too, would this man, of fairer youth than himself, think of that disparaging counsel, when he heard that the monitor had won the prize from which he had warned another? Would it not seem that he had but spoken in the mean cunning dictated by the fear of a worthier rival? Stung by these thoughts he arrested his steps, and, looking the Marquis full in the face, said, "You remind me of one subject in our talk many weeks since, it is my duty to remind you of another. At that time you, and, speaking frankly, I myself, acknowledged the charm in

the face of a young Italian lady. I told you then that, on learning she was intended for the stage, the charm for me had vanished. I said, bluntly, that it should vanish perhaps still more utterly for a noble of your illustrious name; you remember?"

"Yes," answered Alain, hesitatingly, and with a look of surprise.

"I wish now to retract all I said thereon. Mademoiselle Cicogna is not bent on the profession for which she was educated. She would willingly renounce all idea of entering it. The only counterweight which, viewed whether by my reason or my prejudices, could be placed in the opposite scale to that of the excellences which might make any man proud to win her, is withdrawn. I have become acquainted with her since the date of our conversation. Hers is a mind which harmonizes with the loveliness of her face. In one word, Marquis, I should deem myself honored, as well as blest, by such a bride. It was due to her that I should say this; it was due also to you, in case you retain the impression I sought in ignorance to efface. And I am bound, as a gentleman, to obey this twofold duty, even though in so doing I bring upon myself the affliction of a candidate for the hand to which I would fain myself aspire—a candidate with pretensions in every way far superior to my own."

An older or a more cynical man than Alain de Rochebriant might well have found something suspicious in a confession thus singularly volunteered; but the Marquis was himself so loyal that he had no doubt of the loyalty of Graham.

"I reply to you," he said, "with a frankness which finds an example in your own. The first fair face which attracted my fancy since my arrival at Paris was that of the Italian *demoiselle* of whom you speak in terms of such respect. I do think if I had then been thrown into her society, and found her to be such as you no doubt truthfully describe, that fancy might have become a very grave emotion. I was then so poor, so friendless, so despondent. Your words of warning impressed me at the time, but less durably than you might suppose; for that very night as I sat in my solitary attic I said to myself, 'Why should I shrink, with an obsolete old-world prejudice, from what my forefathers would have termed a *mésalliance?* What is the value of my birthright now? None—worse than none. It excludes me from all careers; my name is but a load that weighs me down. Why should I make that name a curse as well as a burden? Nothing is left to me but that which is permitted to all men—wedded and holy love. Could I win to my heart the smile of a woman who brings me that dower, the home of my fathers would lose its gloom.' And therefore, if at that time I had become familiarly acquainted with her who had thus attracted my eye and engaged my thoughts, she might have become my destiny; but now!"

"But now?"

"Things have changed. I am no longer poor, friendless, solitary. I have entered the world of my equals as a Rochbriant; I have made myself responsible for the dignity of my name. I could not give that name to one, however peerless in herself, of whom the world would say, 'But for her marriage she would have been a singer on the stage!' I will own more: the fancy I conceived for the first fair face, other fair faces have dispelled. At this moment, however, I have no thought of marriage; and having known the anguish of struggle, the privations of poverty, I would ask no woman to share the hazard of my return to them. You might present me, then, safely to this beautiful Italian—certain, indeed, that I should be her admirer; equally certain that I could not become your rival."

There was something in this speech that jarred upon Graham's sensitive pride. But, on the whole, he felt relieved, both in honor and in heart. After a few more words, the two young men shook hands and parted. Alain remounted his horse. The day was now declining. Graham hailed a vacant *fiacre*, and directed the driver to Isaura's villa.

CHAPTER IX.

ISAURA.

THE sun was sinking slowly as Isaura sat at her window, gazing dreamily on the rose-hued clouds that made the western border-land between earth and heaven. On the table before her lay a few sheets of MS. hastily written, not yet reperused. That restless mind of hers had left its trace on the MS.

It is characteristic perhaps of the different genius of the sexes, that woman takes to written composition more impulsively, more intuitively, than man—letter-writing, to him a task-work, is to her a recreation. Between the age of sixteen and the date of marriage, six well-educated clever girls out of ten keep a journal; not one well-educated man in ten thousand does. So, without serious and settled intention of becoming an author, how naturally a girl of ardent feeling and vivid fancy seeks in poetry or romance a confessional—an outpouring of thought and sentiment, which are mysteries to herself till she has given them words—and which, frankly revealed on the page, she would not, perhaps could not, utter orally to a living ear.

During the last few days, the desire to create in the realm of fable beings constructed by her own breath, spiritualized by her own soul, had grown irresistibly upon this fair child of song. In fact, when Graham's words had decided the renunciation of her destined career, her instinctive yearnings for the utterance of those sentiments or thoughts which can only find expression in some form of art, denied the one vent, irresistibly impelled her to the other. And in this impulse she was confirmed by the thought that here at least there was nothing which her English friend could disapprove—none of the perils that beset the actress. Here it seemed as if, could she but succeed, her fame would be grateful to the pride of all who loved her. Here was a career ennobled by many a woman, and side by side in rivalry with renowned men. To her it seemed that, could she in this achieve an honored name, that name took its place at once amid the higher ranks of the social world, and in itself brought a priceless dowry and a starry crown. It was, however, not till after the visit to Enghein that this ambition took practical life and form.

One evening after her return to Paris, by an effort so involuntary that it seemed to her *no* effort, she had commenced a tale—without plan—without method—without knowing in one page what would fill the next. Her slight fingers hurried on as if, like the pretended spirit manifestations, impelled by an invisible agency without the pale of the world. She was intoxicated by the mere joy of inventing ideal images. In her own special art an elaborite artist, here she had no thought of art; if art was in her work, it sprang unconsciously from the harmony between herself and her subject—as it is, perhaps, with the early soarings of the genuine lyric poets, in contrast to the dramatic. For the true lyric poet is intensely personal, intensely subjective. It is himself that he expresses, that he represents—and he almost ceases to be lyrical when he seeks to go out of his own existence into that of others with whom he has no sympathy, no *rapport.* This tale was vivid with genius as yet untutored—genius in its morning freshness, full of beauties, full of faults. Isaura distinguished not the faults from the beauties. She felt only a vague persuasion that there was a something higher and brighter—a something more true to her own idiosyncrasy—than could be achieved by the art that 'sings other people's words to other people's music.' From the work thus commenced she had now paused. And it seemed to her fancies that between her inner self and the scene without, whether in the skies and air and sunset, or in the abodes of men stretching far and near, till lost amid the roofs and domes of the great city, she had fixed and riveted the link of a sympathy hitherto fluctuating, unsubstanstial, evanescent, undefined.

Absorbed in her reverie, she did not notice the deepening of the short twilight, till the servant entering drew the curtains between her and the world without, and placed the lamp on the table beside her. Then she turned away with a restless sigh, her eyes fell on the MS., but the charm of it was gone. A sentiment of distrust in its worth had crept into her thoughts, unconsciously to herself, and the page open before her at an uncompleted sentence seemed unwelcome and wearisome as a copy-book is to a child condemned to relinquish a fairy tale half told, and apply himself to a task half done. She fell again into a reverie, when, starting as from a dream, she heard herself addressed by name, and turning round saw Savarin and Gustave Rameau in the room.

"We are come, Signorina," said Savarin "to announce to you a piece of news, and to hazard a petition. The news is this: my young friend here has found a Mæcenas who has the good taste so to admire his lucubrations under the *nom de plume* of Alphonse de Valcour as to

volunteer the expenses for starting a new journal, of which Gustave Rameau is to be editor-in-chief; and I have promised to assist him as contributor for the first two months. I have given him notes of introduction to certain other *feuilletonistes* and critics whom he has on his list. But all put together would not serve to float the journal like a short *roman* from Madame de Grantmesnil. Knowing your intimacy with that eminent artist, I venture to back Rameau's supplication that you would exert your influence on his behalf. As to the *honoraires*, she has but to name them."

"*Carte blanche*," cried Rameau, eagerly.

"You know Eulalie too well, M. Savarin," answered Isaura, with a smile half reproachful, "to suppose that she is a mercenary in letters, and sells her services to the best bidder."

"Bah, *belle enfant!*" said Savarin, with his gay light laugh. "Business is business, and books as well as razors are made to sell. But, of course, a proper prospectus of the journal must accompany your request to write in it. Meanwhile Rameau will explain to you, as he has done to me, that the journal in question is designed for circulation among readers of *les hautes classes:* it is to be pleasant and airy, full of *bons mots* and anecdote; witty, but not ill-natured. Politics to be liberal, of course, but of elegant admixture—champagne and seltzer-water. In fact, however, I suspect that the politics will be a very inconsiderable feature in this organ of fine arts and manners; some amateur scribbler in the *beau monde* will supply them. For the rest, if my introductory letters are successful, Madame de Grantmesnil will not be in bad company."

"You will write to Madame de Grantmesnil?" asked Rameau, pleadingly.

"Certainly I will, as soon——"

"As soon as you have the prospectus, and the names of the *collaborateurs*," interrupted Rameau. "I hope to send you these in a very few days."

While Rameau was thus speaking, Savarin had seated himself by the table, and his eye mechanically resting on the open MS. lighted by chance upon a sentence—an aphorism—embodying a very delicate sentiment in very felicitous diction. One of those choice condensations of thought, suggesting so much more than is said, which are never found in mediocre writers, and, rare even in the best, come upon us like truths seized by surprise.

"*Marbleu!*" exclaimed Savarin, in the impulse of genuine admiration, "but this is beautiful; what is more, it is original,"—and he read the words aloud. Blushing with shame and resentment, Isaura turned and hastily placed her hand on the MS.

"Pardon," said Savarin, humbly; "I confess my sin, but it was so unpremeditated that it does not merit a severe penance. Do not look at me so reproachfully. We all know that young ladies keep commonplace-books in which they enter passages that strike them in the works they read. And you have but shown an exquisite taste in selecting this gem. Do tell me where you found it. Is it somewhere in Lamartine?"

"No," answered Isaura, half inaudibly, and with an effort to withdraw the paper. Savarin gently detained her hand, and looking earnestly into her tell-tale face, divined her secret.

"It is your own, Signorina! Accept the congratulations of a very practised and somewhat fastidious critic. If the rest of what you write resembles this sentence, contribute to Rameau's journal, and I answer for its success."

Rameau approached half incredulous, half envious.

"My dear child," resumed Savarin, drawing away the MS. from Isaura's coy, reluctant clasp, "do permit me to cast a glance over these papers. For what I yet know, there may be here more promise of fame than even you could gain as a singer."

The electric chord in Isaura's heart was touched. Who cannot conceive what the young writer feels, especially the young woman-writer, when hearing the first cheery note of praise from the lips of a writer of established fame?

"Nay, this cannot be worth your reading," said Isaura, falteringly: "I have never written anything of the kind before, and this is a riddle to me. I know not," she added, with a sweet low laugh, "why I began, nor how I should end it."

"So much the better," said Savarin; and he took the MS., withdrew to a recess by the further window, and seated himself there,

reading silently and quickly, but now and then with a brief pause of reflection.

Rameau placed himself beside Isaura on the divan, and began talking with her earnestly—earnestly, for it was about himself and his aspiring hopes. Isaura, on the other hand, more woman-like than author-like, ashamed even to seem absorbed in herself and *her* hopes, and with her back turned, in the instinct of that shame, against the reader of her MS.,—Isaura listened and sought to interest herself solely in the young fellow-author. Seeking to do so she succeeded genuinely, for ready sympathy was a prevalent characteristic of her nature.

"Oh," said Rameau, "I am at the turning-point of my life. Ever since boyhood I have been haunted with the words of André Chénier on the morning he was led to the scaffold: 'And yet there was something here,' striking his forehead. Yes, I, poor, low-born, launching myself headlong in the chase of a name; I, underrated, uncomprehended, indebted even for a hearing to the patronage of an amiable trifler like Savarin, ranked by petty rivals in a grade below themselves,—I now see before me, suddenly, abruptly presented, the expanding gates into fame and fortune. Assist me, you!"

"But how?" said Isaura, already forgetting her MS.; and certainly Rameau did not refer to that.

"How!" echoed Rameau; "how! But do you not see—or, at least, do you not conjecture—this journal of which Savarin speaks contains my present and my future? Present independence, opening to fortune and renown. Ay,—and who shall say? renown beyond that of the mere writer. Behind the gaudy scaffolding of this rickety Empire, a new social edifice unperceived arises; and in that edifice the halls of State shall be given to the men who help obscurely to build it—to men like me." Here, drawing her hand into his own, fixing, on her the most imploring gaze of his dark persuasive eyes, and utterly unconscious of bathos in his adjuration, he added—"Plead for me with your whole mind and heart; use your uttermost influence with the illustrious writer, whose pen can assure the fates of my journal."

Here the door suddenly opened, and following the servant, who announced unintelligibly his name, there entered Graham Vane.

CHAPTER X.

THE Englishman halted at the threshold. His eye, passing rapidly over the figure of Savarin reading in the window-niche, rested upon Rameau and Isaura seated on the same divan, he with her hand clasped in both his own, and bending his face towards hers so closely that a loose tress of her hair seemed to touch his forehead.

The Englishman halted, and no revolution which changes the habitudes and forms of States was ever so sudden as that which passed without a word in the depths of his unconjectured heart. The heart has no history which philosophers can recognize. An ordinary political observer, contemplating the condition of a nation, may very safely tell us what effects must follow the causes patent to his eyes. But the wisest and most far-seeing sage, looking at a man at one o'clock cannot tell us what revulsions of his whole being may be made ere the clock strike two.

As Isaura rose to greet her visitor, Savarin came from the window-niche, the MS. in his hand.

"Son of perfidious Albion," said Savarin, gaily, "we feared you had deserted the French alliance. Welcome back to Paris, and the *entente cordiale*."

"Would I could stay to enjoy such welcome. But I must again quit Paris."

"Soon to return, *n'est ce pas?* Paris is an irresistible magnet to *les beaux esprits*. *Apropos* of *beaux esprits*, be sure to leave orders with your book-seller, if you have one, to enter your name as subscriber to a new journal."

"Certainly, if M. Savarin recommends it."

"He recommends it as a matter of course; he writes in it," said Rameau.

"A sufficient guarantee for its excellence. What is the name of the journal?"

"Not yet thought of," answered Savarin. "Babes must be born before they are christened; but it will be instruction enough to your bookseller to order the new journal to be edited by Gustave Rameau."

Bowing ceremoniously to the editor in prospect, Graham said, half ironically, "May I hope that in the department of criticism you will not be too hard upon poor Tasso?"

"Never fear; the Signorina, who adores Tasso, will take him under her special protec-

tion," said Savarin, interrupting Rameau's sullen and embarrassed reply.

Graham's brow slightly contracted. "Mademoiselle," he said, "is then to be united in the conduct of this journal with M. Gustave Rameau?"

"No, indeed!" exclaimed Isaura, somewhat frightened at the idea.

"But I hope," said Savarin, "that the Signorina may become a contributor too important for an editor to offend by insulting her favorites, Tasso included. Rameau and I came hither to entreat her influence with her intimate and illustrious friend Madame de Grantmesnil, to insure the success of our undertaking by sanctioning the announcement of her name as a contributor."

"Upon social questions—such as the laws of marriage?" said Graham, with a sarcastic smile, which concealed the quiver of his lip and the pain in his voice.

"Nay," answered Savarin, "our journal will be too sportive, I hope, for matters so profound. We would rather have Madame de Grantmesnil's aid in some short *roman*, which will charm the fancy of all and offend the opinions of none. But since I came into the room, I care less for the Signorina's influence with the great authoress," and he glanced significantly at the MS.

"How so?" asked Graham, his eye following the glance.

"If the writer of this MS. will conclude what she has begun, we shall be independent of Madame de Grantmesnil."

"Fie!" cried Isaura, impulsively, her face and neck bathed in blushes—"fie! such words are a mockery."

Graham gazed at her intently, and then turned his eyes on Savarin. He guessed aright the truth. "Mademoiselle then is an author? In the style of her friend Madame de Grantmesnil?"

"Bah!" said Savarin, "I should indeed be guilty of mockery if I paid the Signorina so false a compliment as to say that in a first effort she attained to the style of one of the most finished sovereigns of language that has ever swayed the literature of France. When I say, 'Give us this tale completed, and I shall be consoled if the journal does not gain the aid of Madame de Grantmesnil,' I mean that in these pages there is that nameless charm of freshness and novelty which compensates for many faults never committed by a practised pen like Madame de Grantmesnil's. My dear young lady, go on with this story—finish it. When finished, do not disdain any suggestions I may offer in the way of correction. And I will venture to predict to you so brilliaut a career as author, that you will not regret should you resign for that career the bravos you could command as actress and singer." The Englishman pressed his hand convulsively to his heart, as if smitten by a sudden spasm. But as his eyes rested on Isaura's face, which had become radiant with the enthusiastic delight of genius when the path it would select opens before it as if by a flash from heaven, whatever of jealous irritation, whatever of selfish pain he might before have felt was gone, merged in a sentiment of unutterable sadness and compassion. Practical man as he was, he knew so well all the dangers, all the snares, all the sorrows, all the scandals menacing name and fame, that in the world of Paris must beset the fatherless girl who, not less in authorship than on the stage, leaves the safeguard of private life for ever behind her—who becomes a prey to the tongues of the public. At Paris, how slender is the line that divides the authoress from the *Bohémienne!* He sank into his chair silently, and passed his hand over his eyes as if to shut out a vision of the future.

Isaura in her excitement did not notice the effect on her English visitor. She could not have divined such an effect as possible. On the contrary, even subordinate to her joy at the thought that she had not mistaken the instincts which led her to a nobler vocation than that of the singer, that the cage-bar was opened, and space bathed in sunshine was inviting the new-felt wings—subordinate even to that joy was a joy more wholly, more simply woman's. "If," thought she in this joy, "if this be true, my proud ambition is realized; all disparities of worth and fortune are annulled between me and him to whom I would bring no shame of *mésalliance!*" Poor dreamer, poor child!

"You will let me see what you have written," said Rameau, somewhat imperiously, in the sharp voice habitual to him, and which pierced Graham's ear like a splinter of glass.

"No—not now; when finished."

"You *will* finish it?"

"Oh yes; how can I help it after such encouragement?" She held out her hand to Savarin, who kissed it gallantly; then her eyes intuitively sought Graham's. By that time he had recovered his self-possession: he met her look tranquilly and with a smile; but the smile chilled her—she knew not why.

The conversation then passed upon books and authors of the day, and was chiefly supported by the satirical pleasantries of Savarin, who was in high good spirits.

Graham, who, as we know, had come with the hope of seeing Isaura alone, and with the intention of uttering words which, however guarded, might yet in absence serve as links of union, now no longer coveted that interview, no longer meditated those words. He soon rose to depart.

"Will you dine with me to-morrow?" asked Savarin. "Perhaps I may induce the Signorina and Rameau to offer you the temptation of meeting them."

"By to-morrow I shall be leagues away."

Isaura's heart sank. This time the MS. was fairly forgotten.

"You never said you were going so soon," cried Savarin. "When do you come back, vile deserter?"

"I cannot even guess. Monsieur Rameau, count me among your subscribers. Mademoiselle, my best regards to Signora Venosta. When I see you again, no doubt you will have become famous."

Isaura here could not control herself. She rose impulsively, and approached him, holding out her hand, and attempting a smile.

"But not famous in the way that you warned me from," she said, in whispered tones. "You are friends with me still?" It was like the piteous wail of a child seeking to make it up with one who wants to quarrel, the child knows not why.

Graham was moved, but what could he say? Could he have the right to warn her from this profession also; forbid all desires, all roads of fame to this brilliant aspirant? Even a declared and accepted lover might well have deemed that that would be to ask too much. He replied, "Yes, always a friend, if you could ever need one." Her hand slid from his, and she turned away, wounded to the quick.

"Have you your *coupé* at the door?" asked Savarin.

"Simply a *fiacre*."

"And are going back at once to Paris?"

"Yes."

"Will you kindly drop me in the Rue de Rivoli?"

"Charmed to be of use."

CHAPTER XI.

As the *fiacre* bore to Paris Savarin and Graham, the former said, "I cannot conceive what rich simpleton could entertain so high an opinion of Gustave Rameau as to select a man so young, and of reputation, though promising, so undecided, for an enterprise which requires such a degree of tact and judgment as the conduct of a new journal; and a journal, too, which is to address itself to the *beau monde*. However, it is not for me to criticise a selection which brings a god-send to myself."

"To yourself? You jest; you have a journal of your own. It can only be through an excess of good-nature that you lend your name and pen to the service of M. Gustave Rameau."

"My good-nature does not go to that extent. It is Rameau who confers a service upon me, *Peste! mon cher*, we French authors have not the rents of you rich English milords. And though I am the most economical of our tribe, yet that journal of mine has failed me of late; and this morning I did not exactly see how I was to repay a sum I had been obliged to borrow of a money-lender—for I am too proud to borrow of friends, and to sagacious to borrow of publishers—when in walks *ce ches petit* Gustave with an offer for a few trifles towards starting this new-born journal, which makes a new man of me. Now I am in the undertaking, my *amour propre* and my reputation are concerned in its success; and I shall take care that *collaborateurs* of whose company I am not ashamed are in the same boat. But that charming girl, Isaura! What an enigma the gift of the pen is! No one can ever guess who has it until tried."

"The young lady's MS. then, really merits the praise you bestowed on it?"

"Much more praise, though a great deal of blame, which I did not bestow. For in a first

work faults insure success as much as beauties. Anything better than tame correctness. Yes, her first work, to judge by what is written, must make a hit—a great hit. And that will decide her career—a singer, an actress may retire, often does when she marries an author. But once an author always an author."

"Ah! is it so? If you had a beloved daughter, Savarin, would you encourage her to be an author?"

"Frankly, no—principally because in that case the chances are that she would marry an author; and French authors, at least in the imaginative school, make very uncomfortable husbands."

"Ah! you think the Signorina will marry one of those uncomfortable husbands — M. Rameau, perhaps?"

"Rameau! *Hein!* nothing more likely. That beautiful face of his has its fascination. And to tell you the truth, my wife, who is a striking illustration of the truth that what woman wills heaven wills, is bent upon that improvement in Gustave's moral life which she thinks a union with Mademoiselle Cicogna would achieve. At all events, the fair Italian would have in Rameau a husband who would not suffer her to bury her talents under a bushel. If she succeeds as a writer (by succeeding I mean making money), he will see that her ink-bottle is never empty; and if she don't succeed as a writer, he will take care that the world shall gain an actress or a singer. For Gustave Rameau has a great taste for luxury and show; and whatever his wife can make, I will venture to say that he will manage to spend."

"I thought you had an esteem and regard for Mademoiselle Cicogna. It is Madame your wife, I suppose, who has a grudge against her?"

"On the contrary, my wife idolizes her."

"Savages sacrifice to their idols the things they deem of value. Civilized Parisians sacrifice their idols themselves,—and to a thing that is worthless."

"Rameau is not worthless; he has beauty, and youth, and talent. My wife thinks more highly of him than I do; but I must respect a man who has found admirers so sincere as to set him up in a journal, and give him *carte blanche* for terms to contributors: I know no man in Paris more valuable to me. His worth to me this morning is 30,000 francs. I own I do not think him likely to be a very safe husband; but then French female authors and artists seldom take any husbands except upon short leases. There are no vulgar connubial prejudices in the pure atmosphere of art. Women of genius, like Madame de Grantmesnil, and perhaps like our charming young friend, resemble canary-birds—to sing their best you must separate them from their mates."

The Englishman suppressed a groan, and turned the conversation.

When he had set down his lively companion, Vane dismissed his *fiacre*, and walked to his lodgings musingly.

"No," he said inly; "I must wrench myself from the very memory of that haunting face, —the friend and pupil of Madame de Grantmesnil, the associate of Gustave Rameau, the rival of Julie Caumartin, the aspirant to that pure atmosphere of art in which there are no vulgar connubial prejudices! Could I—whether I be rich or poor—see in *her* the ideal of an English wife? As it is—as it is—with this mystery which oppresses me, which, till solved, leaves my own career insoluble,—as it is, how fortunate that I did not find her alone —did not utter the words that would fain have leaped from my heart—did not say, 'I may not be the rich man I seem, but in that case I shall be yet more ambitious, because struggle and labor are the sinews of ambition! Should I be rich, will you adorn my station? should I be poor, will you enrich poverty with your smile? And can you, in either case, forego—really, painlessly forego, as you led me to hope—the pride in your own art?' My ambition were killed did I marry an actress, a singer. Better that than the hungerer after excitements which are never allayed, the struggler in a career which admits of no retirement —the woman to whom marriage is no goal—who remains to the last the property of the public, and glories to dwell in a house of glass into which every bystander has a right to peer. Is this the ideal of an Englishman's wife and home? No, no!—woe is me, no!"

BOOK SIXTH.

CHAPTER I.

A Few weeks after the date of the preceding chapter, a party of men were assembled at supper in one of the private *salons* of the *Maison Dorée*. The supper was given by Frederic Lemercier, and the guests were, though in various ways, more or less distinguished. Rank and fashion were not unworthily represented by Alain de Rochebriant and Enguerrand de Vandemar, by whose supremacy as 'lion' Frederic still felt rather humbled, though Alain had contrived to bring them familiarly together. Art, Literature, and the Bourse had also their representatives, — in Henri Bernard, a rising young portrait-painter, whom the Emperor honored with his patronage; the Vicomte de Brézé and M. Savarin. Science was not altogether forgotten, but contributed its agreeable delegate in the person of the eminent physician to whom we have been before introduced—Dr. Bacourt.

Doctors in Paris are not so serious as they mostly are in London; and Bacourt, a pleasant philosopher of the school of Aristippus, was no unfrequent nor ungenial guest at any banquet in which the Graces relaxed their zones. Martial glory was also represented at that social gathering by a warrior, bronzed and decorated, lately arrived from Algiers, on which arid soil he had achieved many laurels and the rank of colonel. Finance contributed Duplessis. Well it might; for Duplessis had assisted the host to a splendid *coup* at the Bourse.

"Ah *cher* M. Savarin," says Enguerrand de Vandemar, whose patrician blood is so pure from revolutionary taint that he is always instinctively polite, "what a master-piece in its way is that little paper of yours in the *Sens Commun*, upon the connection between the national character and the national diet—so genuinely witty! for wit is but truth made amusing."

"You flatter me," replied Savarin, modestly; "but I own I do think there is a smattering of philosophy in that trifle. Perhaps, however, the character of a people depends more on its drink than its food. The wines of Italy—heady, irritable, ruinous to the digestion—contribute to the character which belongs to active brains and disordered livers. The Italians conceive great plans, but they cannot digest them. The English common people drink beer, and the beerish character is stolid, rude, but stubborn and enduring. The English middle class imbibe port and sherry; and with these strong potations their ideas become obfuscated. Their character has no liveliness; amusement is not one of their wants; they sit at home after dinner and doze away the fumes of their beverage in the dulness of domesticity. If the English aristocracy are more vivacious and cosmopolitan, it is thanks to the wines of France, which it is the *mode* with them to prefer; but still, like all plagiarists, they are imitators, not inventors—they borrow our wines and copy our manners. The Germans——"

"Insolent barbarians!" growled the French Colonel, twirling his moustache; "if the Emperor were not in his dotage, their Sadowa would ere this have cost them their Rhine."

"The Germans," resumed Savarian unheeding the interruption, "drink acrid wines, varied with beer, to which last their commonalty owes a *quasi* resemblance in stupidity and endurance to the English masses. Acrid wines rot the teeth: Germans are afflicted with toothache from infancy. All people subject to toothache are sentimental. Goethe was a martyr to toothache. Werter was written in one of those paroxysms which predisposes genius to suicide.

But the German character is not all toothache; beer and tobacco step in to the relief of Rhenish acridities, blend philosophy with sentiment, and give that patience in detail which distinguishes their professors and the generals. Besides, the German wines in themselves have other qualities than that of acridity. Taken with sour kraut and stewed prunes, they produce fumes of self-conceit. A German has little of French vanity; he has German self-esteem. He extends the esteem of self to those around him; his home, his village, his city, his country—all belong to him. It is a duty he owes to himself to defend them. Give him his pipe and his sabre—and, M. le Colonel, believe me you will never take the Rhine from him."

"P-r-r," cried the Colonel; "but we have had the Rhine."

"We did not keep it. And I should not say I had a franc-piece if I borrowed it from your purse and had to give it back the next day."

Here there arose a very general hubbub of voices, all raised against M. Savarin. Enguerrand, like a man of good *ton*, hastened to change the conversation.

"Let us leave these poor wretches to their sour wines and toothache. We drinkers of the champagne, all our own, have only pity for the rest of the human race. This new jonrnal, '*Le Sens Commun*,' has a strange title, M. Savarin."

"Yes; '*Le Sens Commun*' is not common in Paris, where we all have too much genius for a thing so vulgar."

"Pray," said the young painter, "tell me what you mean by the title—'*Le Sens Commun*.' It is mysterious."

"True," said Savarin; "it may mean the *Sensis communis* of the Latins, or the Good Sense of the English. The Latin phrase signifies the sense of the common interest; the English phrase, the sense which persons of understanding have in common. I suppose the inventor of our title meant the latter signification."

"And who was the inventor?" asked Bacourt.

"That is a secret which I do not know myself," answered Savarin.

"I guess," said Enguerrand, "that it must be the same person who writes the political leaders. They are most remarkable; for they are so unlike the articles in other journals, whether those journals be the best or the worst. For my own part, I trouble my head very little about politics, and shrug my shoulders at essays which reduce the government of flesh and blood into mathematical problems. But these articles seem to be written by a man of the world, and, as a man of the world myself, I read them."

"But," said the Vicomte de Brézé, who piqued himself on the polish of his style, "they are certainly not the composition of any eminent writer. No eloquence, no sentiment; though I ought not to speak disparagingly of a fellow-contributor."

"All that may be very true," said Savarin, "but M. Enguerrand is right. The papers are evidently the work of a man of the world, and it is for that reason that they have startled the public, and established the success of '*Le Sens Commun*.' But wait a week or two longer, Messieurs, and then tell me what you think of a new *roman* by a new writer, which we shall announce in our impression to-morrow. I shall be disappointed, indeed, if that does not charm you. No lack of eloquence and sentiment there."

"I am rather tired of eloquence and sentiment," said Enguerrand. "Your editor, Gustave Rameau, sickens me of them with his 'Starlit Meditations in the Streets of Paris,' morbid imitations of Heine's enigmatical 'Evening Songs.' Your journal would be perfect if you could suppress the editor."

"Suppress Gustave Rameau!" cried Bernard, the painter; "I adore his poems, full of heart for poor suffering humanity."

"Suffering humanity so far as it is packed up in himself," said the physician, drily, "and a great deal of the suffering is bile. But *à propos* of your new journal, Savarin, there is a paragraph in it to-day which excites my curiosity. It says that the Vicomte de Mauléon has arrived in Paris, after many years of foreign travel; and then, referring modestly enough to the reputation for talent which he had acquired in early youth, proceeds to indulge in a prophecy of the future political career of a man who, if he have a grain of *sens commun*, must think that the less said about him the better. I remember him well; a terrible *mauvais sujet*, but superbly handsome. There was a shocking story about the

jewels of a foreign duchess, which obliged him to leave Paris."

"But," said Savarin, "the paragraph you refer to hints that that story is a groundless calumny, and that the true reason for De Mauléon's voluntary self-exile was a very common one among young Parisians—he had lavished away his fortune. He returns, when, either by heritage or his own exertions, he has secured elsewhere a competence."

"Nevertheless I cannot think that society will receive him," said Bacourt. "When he left Paris, there was one joyous sigh of relief among all men who wished to avoid duels, and keep their wives out of temptation. Society may welcome back a lost sheep, but not a reinvigorated wolf."

"I beg your pardon, *mon cher*," said Enguerrand; "society has always opened its fold to this poor ill-treated wolf. Two days ago Louvier summoned to his house the surviving relations or connections of De Mauléon—among whom are the Marquis de Rochebriant, the Counts de Passy, De Beauvilliers, De Chavigny, my father, and of course his two sons—and submitted to us the proofs which completely clear the Vicomte de Mauléon of even a suspicion of fraud or dishonor in the affair of the jewels. The proofs include the written attestation of the Duke himself, and letters from that nobleman after De Mauléon's disappearance from Paris, expressive of great esteem, and, indeed, of great admiration, for the Vicomte's sense of honor and generosity of character. The result of this family council was, that we all went in a body to call on De Mauléon. And he dined with my father that same day. You know enough of the Count de Vandemar, and, I may add, of my mother, to be sure that they are both, in their several ways, too regardful of social conventions to lend their countenance even to a relation without well weighing the *pros* and *cons*. And as for Raoul, Bayard himself could not be a greater stickler on the point of honor."

This declaration was followed by a silence that had the character of stupor.

At last Duplessis said, "But what has Louvier to do in this *galère?* Louvier is no relation of that well-born *vaurien;* why should *he* summon your family council?"

"Louvier excused his interference on the ground of early and intimate friendship with De Mauléon, who, he said, came to consult him on arriving at Paris, and who felt too proud or too timid to address relations with whom he had long dropped all intercourse. An intermediary was required, and Louvier volunteered to take that part on himself; nothing more natural, nor more simple. By the way, Alain, you dine with Louvier to-morrow, do you not?—a dinner in honor of our rehabilitated kinsman. I and Raoul go."

"Yes, I shall be charmed to meet again a man who, whatever might be his errors in youth, on which," added Alain, slightly coloring, "it certainly does not become me to be severe, must have suffered the most poignant anguish a man of honor can undergo—viz., honor suspected; and who now, whether by years or sorrow, is so changed that I cannot recognize a likeness to the character I have just heard given to him as *mauvais sujet* and *vaurien*."

"Bravo!" cried Enguerrand; "all honor to courage—and at Paris it requires great courage to defend the absent."

"Nay," answered Alain in a low voice. "The *gentilhomme* who will not defend another *gentilhomme* traduced, would, as a soldier, betray a citadel and desert a flag."

"You say M. de Mauléon is changed," said De Brézé; "yes, he must be growing old. No trace left of his good looks?"

"Pardon me," said Enguerrand, "he is *bien conservé*, and has still a very handsome head and an imposing presence. But one cannot help doubting whether he deserved the formidable reputation he acquired in youth; his manner is so singularly mild and gentle, his conversation so winningly modest, so void of pretence, and his mode of life is as simple as that of a Spanish hidalgo."

"He does not, then, affect the *rôle* of Monte Christo," said Duplessis, "and buy himself into notice like that hero of romance?"

"Certainly not: but he says very frankly that he has but a very small income, but more than enough for his wants—richer than in his youth; for he has learned content. We may dismiss the hint in '*Le Sens Commun*' about his future political career: at least he evinces no such ambition."

"How could he as a Legitimist?" said Alain, bitterly. "What department would elect him?"

"But is he a Legitimist?" asked De Brézé.

"I take it for granted that he must be that," answered Alain, haughtily, "for he is a De Mauléon."

"His father was as good a De Mauléon as himself, I presume," rejoined De Brézé, drily; "and he enjoyed a place at the Court of Louis Philippe, which a Legitimist could scarcely accept. Victor did not, I fancy, trouble his head about politics at all; at the time I remember him; but to judge by his chief associates and the notice he received from the Princes of the House of Orleans, I should guess that he had no predilections in favor of Henry V."

"I should regret to think so," said Alain, yet more haughtily, "since the De Mauléons acknowledge the head of their house in the representative of the Rochebriants."

"At all events," said Duplessis, "M. de Mauléon appears to be a philosopher of rare stamp. A Parisian who has known riches and is contented to be poor, is a phenomenon I should like to study."

"You have that chance to-morrow evening, M. Duplessis," said Enguerrand.

"What! at M. Louvier's dinner? Nay, I have no other acquaintance with M. Louvier than that of the Bourse, and the acquaintance is not cordial."

"I did not mean at M. Louvier's dinner, but at the Duchesse de Tarascon's ball. You, as one of her special favorites, will doubtless honor her *réunion*."

"Yes; I have promised my daughter to go to the ball. But the Duchesse is Imperialist. M. de Mauléon seems to be either a Legitimist, according to M. le Marquis, or an Orleanist, according to our friend De Brézé."

"What of that? Can there be a more loyal Bourbonite than De Rochebriant? and *he* goes to the ball. It is given out of the season in celebration of a family marriage. And the Duchesse de Tarascon is connected with Alain, and therefore with De Mauléon, though but distantly."

"Ah! excuse my ignorance of genealogy."

"As if the genelogy of noble names were not the history of France," muttered Alain, indignantly.

CHAPTER II.

YES, the "*Sens Commun*" was a success: it had made a sensation at starting; the sensation was on the increase. It is difficult for an Englishman to comprehend the full influence of a successful journal at Paris; the station—political, literary, social—which it confers on the contributors who effect the success. M. Lebeau had shown much more sagacity in selecting Gustave Rameau for the nominal editor than Savarin supposed or my reader might detect. In the first place, Gustave himself, with all his defects of information and solidity of intellect, was not without real genius; and a sort of genius that, when kept in restraint, and its field confined to sentiment or sarcasm, was in unison with the temper of the day: in the second place, it was only through Gustave that Lebeau could have got at Savarin; and the names which that brilliant writer had secured at the outset would have sufficed to draw attention to the earliest numbers of the "*Sens Communs*," despite a title which did not seem alluring. But these names alone could not have sufficed to circulate the new journal to the extent it had already reached. This was due to the curiosity excited by leading articles of a style new to Parisian public, and of which the authorship defied conjecture. They were signed Pierre Firmin—supposed to be a *nom de plume*, as that name was utterly unknown in the world of letters. They affected the tone of an impartial observer; they neither espoused nor attacked any particular party; they laid down no abstract doctrines of government. But, somehow or other, in language terse yet familiar, sometimes careless yet never vulgar, they expressed a prevailing sentiment of uneasy discontent, a foreboding of some destined change in things established, without defining the nature of such change, without saying whether it would be for good or for evil. In his criticisms upon individuals, the writer was guarded and moderate—the keenest-eyed censor of the press could not have found a pretext for interference with expression of opinions so polite. Of the Emperor these articles spoke little, but that little was not disrespectful; yet, day after day, the articles contributed to sap the Empire. All malcontents of every shade comprehended, as by a secret of freemasonry, that in this jour-

nal they had an ally. Against religion not a word was uttered, yet the enemies of religion bought that journal; still, the friends of religion bought it too, for those articles treated with irony the philosophers on paper who thought that their contradictory crotchets could fuse themselves into any single Utopia, or that any social edifice, hurriedly run up by the crazy few, could become a permanent habitation for the turbulent many, without the clamps of a creed.

The tone of these articles always corresponded with the title of the journal—"*Common sense.*" It was to common-sense that it appealed—appealed in the utterance of a man who disdained the subtle theories, the vehement declamation, the credulous beliefs, or the inflated bombast, which constitute so large a portion of the Parisian press. The articles rather resembled certain organs of the English press, which profess to be blinded by no enthusiasm for anybody or anything, which find their sale in that sympathy with ill-nature to which Huet ascribes the popularity of Tacitus, and, always quietly undermining institutions with a covet sneer, never pretend to a spirit of imagination so at variance with common-sense as a conjecture how the institution should be rebuilt or replaced.

Well, somehow or other the journal, as I was saying, hit the taste of the Parisian public. It intimated, with the easy grace of an unpremeditated agreeable talker, that French society in all its classes was rotten, and each class was willing to believe that all the others were rotten, and agreed that unless the others were reformed, there was something very unsound in itself.

The ball at the Duchesse de Tarascon's was a brilliant event. The summer was far advanced; many of the Parisian holiday-makers had returned to the capital, but the season had not commenced, and a ball at that time of the year was a very unwonted event. But there was a special occasion for this *fête*—a marriage between a niece of the Duchesse and the son of a great official in high favor at the Imperial Court.

The dinner at Louvier's broke up early, and the music for the second waltz was sounding when Enguerrand, Alain, and the Vicomte de Mauléon ascended the stairs. Raoul did not accompany them; he went very rarely to any balls—never to one given by an Imperialist, however nearly related to him the Imperialist might be. But, in the sweet indulgence of his good nature, he had no blame for those who did go—not for Enguerrand, still less, of course, for Alain.

Something, too, might well here be said as to his feeling towards Victor de Mauléon. He had joined in the family acquittal of that kinsman as to the grave charge of the jewels; the proofs of innocence thereon seemed to him unequivocal and decisive, therefore he had called on the Vicomte and acquiesced in all formal civilities shown to him. But, such acts of justice to a fellow-*gentilhomme* and a kinsman duly performed, he desired to see as little as possible of the Vicomte de Mauléon. He reasoned thus: "Of every charge which society made against this man he is guiltless. But of all the claims to admiration which society accorded to him, before it erroneously condemned, there are none which make me covet his friendship, or suffice to dispel doubts as to what he may be when society once more receives. And the man is so captivating that I should dread his influence over myself did I see much of him."

Raoul kept his reasonings to himself, for he had that sort of charity which indisposes an amiable man to be severe on bygone offences. In the eyes of Enguerrand and Alain, and such young votaries of the *mode* as they could influence, Victor de Mauléon assumed almost heroic proportions. In the affair which had inflicted on him a calumny so odious, it was clear that he had acted with chivalrous delicacy of honor. And the turbulence and recklessness of his earlier years, redeemed as they were, in the traditions of his contemporaries, by courage and generosity, were not offences to which young Frenchmen are inclined to be harsh. All question as to the mode in which his life might have been passed during his long absence from the capital, was merged in the respect due to the only facts known, and these were clearly proved in his *pièces justificatives*. 1st, That he had served under another name in the ranks of the army in Algiers; had distinguished himself there for signal valor, and received, with promotion, the decoration of the cross. His real name was known only to his colonel, and on quitting the service, the colonel placed in his hands a letter of warm eulogy on

his conduct, and identifying him as Victor de Mauléon. 2ndly, That in California he had saved a wealthy family from midnight murder, fighting single-handed against and overmastering three ruffians, and declining all other reward from those he had preserved than a written attestation of their gratitude. In all countries, valor ranks high in the list of virtues; in no country does it so absolve from vices as it does in France.

But as yet Victor de Mauléon's vindication was only known by a few, and those belonging to the gayer circles of life. How he might be judged by the sober middle class, which constitutes the most important section of public opinion to a candidate for political trusts and distinctions, was another question.

The Duchesse stood at the door to receive her visitors. Duplessis was seated near the entrance, by the side of a distinguished member of the Imperial Government, with whom he was carrying on a whispered conversation. The eye of the financier, however, turned towards the doorway as Alain and Enguerrand entered, and passing over their familiar faces, fixed itself attentively on that of a much older man whom Enguerrand was presenting to the Duchesse, and in whom Duplessis rightly divined the Vicomte de Mauléon. Certainly if no one could have recognized M. Lebeau in the stately personage who had visited Louvier, still less could one who had heard of the wild feats of the *roi des viveurs* in his youth reconcile belief in such tales with the quiet modesty of mien which distinguished the cavalier now replying, with bended head and subdued accents, to the courteous welcome of the brillient hostess. But for such differences in attributes between the past and the present De Mauléon, Duplessis had been prepared by the conversation at the *Maison Dorée*. And now, as the Vicomte, yielding his place by the Duchesse to some new-comer, glided on, and, leaning against a column, contemplated the gay scene before him with that expression of countenance, half sarcastic, half mournful, with which men regard, after long estrangement, the scenes of departed joys, Duplessis felt that no change in that man had impaired the force of character which had made him the hero of reckless coevals. Though wearing no beard, not even a moustache, there was something emphatically masculine in the contour of the close-shaven cheek and resolute jaw, in a forehead broad at the temples, and protuberant in those organs over the eyebrows which are said to be significant of quick perception and ready action; in the lips, when in repose compressed, perhaps somewhat stern in their expression, but pliant and mobile when speaking, and wonderfully fascinating when they smiled. Altogether, about this Victor de Mauléon there was a nameless distinction, apart from that of conventional elegance. You would have said, "That is a man of some marked individuality, an eminence of some kind in himself." You would not be surprised to hear that he was a party-leader, a skilled diplomatist, a daring soldier, an adventurous traveller; but you would not guess him to be a student, an author, an artist.

While Duplessis thus observed the Vicomte de Mauléon, all the while seeming to lend an attentive ear to the whispered voice of the Minister by his side, Alain passed on into the ball-room. He was fresh enough to feel the exhilaration of the dance. Enguerrand (who had survived that excitement, and who habitually deserted any assembly at an early hour for the cigar and whist of his club) had made his way to De Mauléon, and there stationed himself. The lion of one generation has always a mixed feeling of curiosity and respect for the lion of a generation before him, and the young Vandemar had conceived a strong and almost an affectionate interest in this discrowned king of that realm in fashion which, once lost, is never to be regained; for it is only Youth that can hold its sceptre and command its subjects.

"In this crowd, Vicomte," said Enguerrand, "there must be many old acquaintances of yours?"

"Perhaps so, but as yet I have only seen new faces."

As he thus spoke, a middle-aged man, decorated with the grand cross of the Legion and half-a-dozen foreign orders, lending his arm to a lady of the same age radiant in diamonds, passed by towards the ball-room, and in some sudden swerve of his person, occasioned by a pause of his companion to adjust her train, he accidently brushed against De Mauléon, whom he had not before noticed. Turning round to apologize for his awkwardness, he encoun-

tered the full gaze of the Vicomte, started, changed countenance, and hurried on his companion.

"Do you not recognize his Excellency?" said Enguerrand, smiling. "His cannot be a new face to you."

"Is it the Baron de Lacy?" asked De Mauléon.

"The Baron de Lacy, now Count d'Epinay, ambassador at the Court of——, and, if report speak true, likely soon to exchange that post for the *porte feuille* of Minister."

"He has got on in life since I saw him last, the little Baron. He was then my devoted imitator, and I was not proud of the imitation."

"He has got on by always clinging to the skirts of some one stronger than himself—to yours, I daresay, when, being a *parvenu* despite his usurped title of Baron, he aspired to the *entrée* into clubs and *salons*. The *entrée* thus obtained, the rest followed easily: he became a *millionaire* through a wife's *dot*, and an ambassador through the wife's lover, who is a power in the state."

"But he must have substance in himself. Empty bags cannot be made to stand upright. Ah! unless I mistake, I see some one I knew better. Yon pale, thin man, also with the grand cross—surely that is Alfred Hennequin. Is he too a decorated Imperialist? I left him a socialistic republican."

"But, I presume, even then an eloquent *avocat*. He got into the Chamber, spoke well, defended the *coup-d'état*. He has just been made *Préfet* of the great department of the ——, a popular appointment. He bears a high character. Pray renew your acquaintance with him; he is coming this way."

"Will so grave a dignitary renew acquaintance with me? I doubt it."

But as De Mauléon said this, he moved from the column, and advanced towards the *Préfet*. Enguerrand followed him, and saw the Vicomte extend his hand to his old acquaintance. The *Préfet* stared, and said, with frigid courtesy, "Pardon me,—some mistake."

"Allow me, M. Hennequin," said Enguerrand, interposing, and wishing good-naturedly to save De Mauléon the awkwardness of introducing himself,—"allow me to re-introduce you to my kinsman, whom the lapse of years may well excuse you for forgetting, the Vicomte de Mauléon."

Still the *Préfet* did not accept the hand. He bowed with formal ceremony, said, "I was not aware that M. le Vicomte had returned to Paris," and, moving to the doorway, made his salutation to the hostess and disappeared.

"The insolent!" muttered Enguerrand.

"Hush!" said De Mauléon, quietly, "I can fight no more duels—especially with a *Préfet*. But I own I am weak enough to feel hurt at such a reception from Hennequin, for he owed me some obligations—small, perhaps, but still they were such as might have made me select him, rather than Louvier, as the vindicator of my name, had I known him to be so high placed. But a man who has raised himself into an authority may well be excused for forgetting a friend whose character needs defence. I forgive him."

There was something pathetic in the Vicomte's tone which touched Enguerrand's warm if light heart. But De Mauléon did not allow him time to answer. He went on quickly through an opening in the gay crowd, which immediately closed behind him, and Enguerrand saw him no more that evening.

Duplessis ere this had quitted his seat by the Minister, drawn thence by a young and very pretty girl resigned to his charge by a cavalier with whom she had been dancing. She was the only daughter of Duplessis, and he valued her even more than the millions he had made at the Bourse. "The Princess," she said, "has been swept off in the train of some German Royalty; so, *petit père*, I must impose myself on thee."

The Princess, a Russian of high rank, was the *chaperon* that evening of Mademoiselle Valérie Duplessis.

"And I suppose I must take thee back into the ball room," said the financier, smiling proudly, "and find thee partners."

"I don't want your aid for that Monsieur; except this quadrille, my list is pretty well filled up."

"And I hope the partners will be pleasant. Let me know who they are," he whispered, as they threaded their way into the ball room.

The girl glanced at her tablet.

"Well, the first on the list is milord somebody, with an unpronounceable English name."

"Beau cavalier?"

"No; ugly, old too—thirty at least."

Duplessis felt relieved. He did not wish

his daughter to fall in love with an Englishman.

"And the next?"

"The next?" she said, hesitatingly, and he observed that a soft blush accompanied the hesitation.

"Yes, the next. Not English too?"

"Oh, no, the Marquis de Rochebriant."

"Ah, who presented him to thee?"

"Thy friend, *petit père*, M. de Brézé."

Duplessis again glanced at his daughter's face; it was bent over her boquet.

"Is he ugly also?"

"Ugly!" exclaimed the girl, indignantly; "why he is——" she checked herself and turned away her head.

Duplessis became thoughtful. He was glad that he had accompanied his child into the ball-room; he would stay there, and keep watch on her and Rochebriant also.

Up to that moment he had felt a dislike to Rochebriant. That young noble's too obvious pride of race had nettled him, not the less that the financier himself was vain of his ancestry. Perhaps he still disliked Alain, but the dislike was now accompanied with a certain, not hostile, interest; and if he became connected with the race, the pride in it might grow contagious.

They had not been long in the ball-room before Alain came up to claim his promised partner. In saluting Duplessis, his manner was the same as usual—not more cordial, not less ceremoniously distant. A man so able as the financier cannot be without quick knowledge of the human heart.

"If disposed to fall in love with Valérie," thought Duplessis, "he would have taken more pains to please her father. Well, thank heaven, there are better matches to be found for her than a noble without fortune, and a Legitimist without career."

In fact, Alain felt no more for Valérie than for any other pretty girl in the room. In talking with the Vicomte de Brézé in the intervals of the dance, he had made some passing remark on her beauty; De Brézé had said, "Yes, she is charming; I will present you," and hastened to do so before Rochebriant even learned her name. So introduced, he could but invite her to give him her first disengaged dance, and when that was fixed, he had retired, without entering into conversation.

"Now, as they took their places in the quadrille, he felt that effort of speech had become a duty, if not a pleasure; and of course, he began with the first commonplace which presented itself to his mind.

"Do you not think it a very pleasant ball, Mademoiselle?"

"Yes," dropped, in almost inaudible reply, from Valérie's rosy lips.

"And not overcrowded, as most balls are?"

Valérie's lips again moved, but this time quite inaudibly.

The obligations of the figure now caused a pause. Alain racked his brains, and began—

"They tell me the last season was more than usually gay; of that I cannot judge, for it was well-nigh over when I came to Paris for the first time."

Valérie looked up with a more animated expression than her childlike face had yet shown, and said, this time distinctly, "This is my first ball, Monsieur le Marquis."

"One has only to look at Mademoiselle to divine that fact," replied Alain, gallantly.

Again the conversation was interrupted by the dance, but the ice between the two was now broken. And when the quadrille was concluded, and Rochebriant led the fair Valérie back to her father's side, she felt as if she had been listening to the music of the spheres, and that the music had now suddenly stopped. Alain, alas for her! was under no such pleasing illusion. Her talk had seemed to him artless indeed, but very insipid, compared with the brilliant conversation of the wedded *Parisiennes* with whom he more habitually danced; and it was with rather a sensation of relief that he made his parting bow, and receded into the crowd of by-standers.

Meanwhile De Mauléon had quitted the assemblage, walking slowly through the deserted streets towards his apartment. The civilities he had met at Louvier's dinner-party, and the marked distinction paid to him by kinsmen of rank and position so unequivocal as Alain and Enguerrand, had softened his mood and cheered his spirits. He had begun to question himself whether a fair opening to his political ambition was really forbidden to him under the existent order of things, whether it necessitated the employment of such dangerous tools as those to which anger and despair had reconciled his intellect. But the pointed way in

which he had been shunned or slighted by the two men who belonged to political life—two men who in youth had looked up to himself, and whose dazzling career of honors was identified with the Imperial system — reanimated his fiercer passions and his more perilous designs. The frigid accost of Hennequin more especially galled him; it wounded not only his pride but his heart; it had the venom of ingratitude, and it is the peculiar privilege of ingratitude to wound hearts that have learned to harden themselves to the hate or contempt of men to whom no services have been rendered. In some private affair concerning his property, De Mauléon had had occasion to consult Hennequin, then a rising young *avocat.* Out of that consultation a friendship had sprung up, despite the differing habits and social grades of the two men. One day, calling on Hennequin, he found him in a state of great nervous excitement. The *avocat* had received a public insult in the *salon* of a noble, to whom De Mauléon had introduced him, from a man who pretended to the hand of a young lady to whom Hennequin was attached, and indeed almost affianced. The man was notorious *spadassin*—a duellist little less renowned for skill in all weapons than De Mauléon himself. The affair had been such, that Hennequin's friends assured him he had no choice but to challenge this bravo. Hennequin, brave enough at the bar, was no hero before sword-point or pistol. He was utterly ignorant of the use of either weapon; his death in the encounter with an antagonist so formidable seemed to him certain, and life was so precious; an honorable and distinguished career opening before him, marriage with the woman he loved: still he had the Frenchman's point of honor. He had been told that he must fight; well, then, he must. He asked De Mauléon to be one of his seconds, and in asking him, sank in his chair, covered his face with his hands, and burst into tears.

"Wait till to-morrow," said De Mauléon; "take no step till then. Meanwhile, you are in my hands, and I answer for your honor."

On leaving Hennequin, Victor sought the *spadassin* at the club of which they were both members, and contrived without reference to Hennequin, to pick a quarrel with him. A challenge ensued; a duel with swords took place the next morning. De Mauléon disarmed and wounded his antagonist, not gravely, but sufficiently to terminate the encounter. He assisted to convey the wounded man to his apartment, and planted himself by his bedside, as if he were a friend.

"Why on earth did you fasten a quarrel on me?" asked the *spadassin;* "and why, having done so, did you spare my life; for your sword was at my heart when you shifted its point, and pierced my shoulder?"

"I will tell you, and in so doing, beg you to accept my friendship hereafter, on one condition. In the course of the day, write or dictate a few civil words of apology to M. Hennequin. *Ma foi!* every one will praise you for a generosity so becoming in a man who has given such proofs of courage and skill, to an *avocat* who has never handled a sword nor fired a pistol."

That same day De Mauléon remitted to Hennequin an apology for heated words freely retracted, which satisfied all his friends. For the service thus rendered by De Mauléon, Hennequin declared himself everlastingly indebted. In fact, he entirely owed to that friend his life, his marriage, his honor, his career.

"And now," thought De Mauléon, "now, when he could so easily requite me,—now he will not even take my hand. Is human nature itself at war with me?"

CHAPTER III.

NOTHING could be simpler than the apartment of the Vicomte de Mauléon, in the second story of a quiet old-fashioned street. It had been furnished at small cost out of his savings. Yet, on the whole, it evinced the good taste of a man who had once been among the exquisites of the polite world.

You felt that you were in the apartment of a gentleman, and a gentleman of somewhat severe tastes, and of sober matured years. He was sitting the next morning in the room which he used as a private study. Along the walls were arranged dwarf bookcases, as yet occupied by few books, most of them books of reference, others cheap editions of the French classics in prose—no poets, no romance-writers —with a few Latin authors also in prose—

Cicero, Sallust, Tacitus. He was engaged at his desk writing—a book with its leaves open before him, "Paul Louis Courier," that model of political irony and masculine style of composition. There was a ring at his door-bell. The Vicomte kept no servant. He rose and answered the summons. He recoiled a few paces on recognizing his visitor in M. Hennequin.

The *Préfet* this time did not withdraw his hand; he extended it, but it was with a certain awkwardness and timidity.

"I thought it my duty to call on you, Vicomte, thus early, having already seen M. Enguerrand de Vandemar. He has shown me the copies of the *pièces* which were inspected by your distinguished kinsmen, and which completely clear you of the charge that, grant me your pardon when I say, seemed to me still to remain unanswered when I had the honor to meet you last night."

"It appears to me, M. Hennequin that you, as an *avocat* so eminent, might have convinced yourself very readily of that fact."

"M. le Vicomte, I was in Switzerland with my wife at the time of the unfortunate affair in which you were involved."

"But when you returned to Paris, you might perhaps have deigned to make inquiries so affecting the honor of one you had called a friend, and for whom you had professed"—De Mauléon paused; he disdained to add—"an eternal gratitude."

Hennequin colored slightly, but replied with self-possession.

"I certainly did inquire. I did hear that the charge against you with regard to the abstraction of the jewels was withdrawn—that you were therefore acquitted by law; but I heard also that society did not acquit you, and that, finding this, you had quitted France. Pardon me again, no one would listen to me when I attempted to speak on your behalf. But now that so many years have elapsed, that the story is imperfectly remembered—that relations so high-placed receive you so cordially—now, I rejoice to think that you will have no difficulty in regaining a social position never really lost, but for a time resigned."

"I am duly sensible of the friendly joy you express. I was reading the other day in a lively author some pleasant remarks on the effects of *médisance* or calumny upon our impressionable Parisian public. 'If,' says the writer, 'I found myself accused of having put the two towers of Notre Dame into my waistcoat-pocket, I should not dream of defending myself; I should take to flight. And,' adds the writer, 'if my best friend were under the same accusation, I should be so afraid of being considered his accomplice that I should put my best friend outside the door.' Perhaps, M. Hennequin, I was seized with the first alarm. Why should I blame you if seized with the second? Happily, this good city of Paris has its reactions. And you can now offer me your hand. Paris has by this time discovered that the two towers of Notre Dame are not in my pocket."

There was a pause. De Mauléon had resettled himself at his desk, bending over his papers, and his manner seemed to imply that he considered the conversation at an end.

But a pang of shame, of remorse, of tender remembrance, shot across the heart of the decorous, worldly, self-seeking man, who owed all that he now was to the *ci-devant vaurien* before him. Again he stretched forth his hand, and this time grasped de Mauléon's warmly. "Forgive me," he said, feelingly and hoarsely; "Forgive me. I was to blame. By character, and perhaps by the necessities of my career, I am over-timid to public opinion, public scandal—forgive me. Say if in anything now I can requite, though but slightly, the service I owe you."

De Mauléon looked steadly at the *Préfet*, and said slowly, "Would you serve me in turn? are you sincere?"

The *Préfet* hesitated a moment, then answered firmly, "Yes."

"Well, then, what I ask of you is a frank opinion—not as lawyer, not as *Préfet*, but as a man who knows the present state of French society. Give that opinion without respect to my feelings one way or other. Let it emanate solely from your practised judgment."

"Be it so," said Hennequin, wondering what was to come.

De Mauléon resumed—

"As you may remember, during my former career I had no political ambition. I did not meddle with politics. In the troubled times that immediately succeeded the fall of Louis Philippe I was but an epicurean looker-on. Grant that, so far as admission to the *salons*

are concerned, I shall encounter no difficulty in regaining position. But as regards the Chamber, public life, a political career—can I have my fair opening under the Empire? You pause. Answer as you have promised frankly."

"The difficulties in the way of a political career would be very great."

"Insuperable."

"I fear so. Of course, in my capacity of *Préfet*, I have no small influence in my department in support of a Government candidate. But I do not think that the Imperial Government could, as this time especially, in which it must be very cautious in selecting its candidates, be induced to recommend you. The affair of the jewels would be raked up—your vindication disputed, denied—the fact that for so many years you have acquiesced in that charge without taking steps to refute it—your antecedents, even apart from that charge—your present want of property (M. Guerrand tells me your income is but moderate)—the absence of all previous repute in public life. No; relinquish the idea of political contest—it would expose you to inevitable mortifications, to a failure that would even jeopardize the admission to the *salons* which you are now gaining. You could not be a Government candidate."

"Granted. I may have no desire to be one; but an opposition candidate, one of the Liberal party?"

"As an Imperialist," said Hennequin, smiling gravely, "and holding the office I do, it would not become me to encourage a candidate against the Emperor's Government. But speaking with the frankness you solicit, I should say that your chances there are infinitely worse. The opposition are in a pitiful minority—the most eminent of the Liberals can scarcely gain seats for themselves; great local popularity or property, high established repute for established patriotism, or proved talents of oratory and statesmanship, are essential qualifications for a seat in the opposition, and even these do not suffice for a third of the persons who possess them. Be again what you were before, the hero of *salons* remote from the turbulent vulgarity of politics."

"I am answered. Thank you once more. The service I rendered you once is requited now."

"No, indeed—no; but will you dine with me quietly to-day, and allow me to present to you my wife and two children, born since we parted? I say to-day, for to-morrow I return to my *Préfecture*."

"I am infinitely obliged by your invitation, but to-day I dine with the Count de Beauvilliers to meet some of the *Corps Diplomatique*. I must make good my place in the *salons*, since you so clearly show me that I have no chance of one in the Legislature—unless——"

"Unless what?"

"Unless their happen one of those revolutions in which the scum comes uppermost."

"No fear of that. The subterranean barracks and railway have ended for ever the rise of the scum—the reign of the *canaille* and its barricades."

"Adieu, my dear Hennequin. My respectful *hommages à Madame*."

After that day the writing of Pierre Firmin in "*Le Sens Commun*," though still keeping within the pale of the law, became more decidedly hostile to the Imperial system, still without committing their author to any definite programme of the sort of government that should succeed it.

CHAPTER IV.

THE weeks glided on. Isaura's MS. had passed into print: it came out in the French fashion of *feuilletons*—a small detachment at a time. A previous flourish of trumpets by Savarin and the clique at his command insured it attention, if not from the general public, at least from critical and literary coteries. Before the fourth instalment appeared it had outgrown the patronage of the coteries; it seized hold of the public. It was not in the last school in fashion; incidents were not crowded and violent—they were few and simple, rather appertaining to an elder school, in which poetry of sentiment and grace of diction prevailed. That very resemblance to old favorites gave it the attraction novelty. In a word, it excited a pleasant admiration, and great curiosity was felt as to the authorship. When it oozed out that it was by the young lady whose future success in the musical world had been so sanguinely predicted by all who had heard her sing, the interest wonderfully increased. Petitions to be intro-

duced to her acquaintance were showered upon Savarin: before she scarcely realized her dawning fame she was drawn from her quiet home, and retired habits; she was *fêtée* and courted in the literary circle of which Savarin was a chief. That circle touched, on one side, Bohemia; on the other, that realm of politer fashion which, in every intellectual metropolis, but especially in Paris, seeks to gain borrowed light from luminaries in art and letters. But the very admiration she obtained somewhat depressed, somewhat troubled her; after all, it did not differ from that which was at her command as a singer.

On the one hand, she shrank instinctively from the caresses of female authors and the familiar greetings of male authors, who frankly lived in philosophical disdain of the conventions respected by sober, decorous mortals. On the other hand, in the civilities of those who, while they courted a rising celebrity, still held their habitual existence apart from the artistic world, there was a certain air of condescension, of patronage towards the young stranger with no other protector but Signora Venosta, the *ci-devant* public singer, and who had made her *début* in a journal edited by M. Gustave Rameau, which, however disguised by exaggerated terms of praise, wounded her pride of woman in flattering her vanity as author. Among this latter set were wealthy, high-born men, who addressed her as woman—as woman beautiful and young—with words of gallantry that implied love, but certainly no thought of marriage: many of the most ardent were indeed married already. But once launched into the thick of Parisian hospitalities, it was difficult to draw back. The Venosta wept at the thought of missing some lively *soirée*, and Savarin laughed at her shrinking fastidiousness as that of a child's ignorance of the world. But still she had her mornings to herself; and in those mornings, devoted to the continuance of her work (for the commencement was in print before a third was completed), she forgot the commonplace world that received her in the evenings. Insensibly to herself the tone of this work had changed as it proceeded. It had begun seriously indeed, but in the seriousness there was a certain latent joy. It might be the joy of having found vent of utterance; it might be rather a joy still more latent, inspired by the remembrance of Graham's words and looks, and by the thought that she had renounced all idea of the professional career which he had evidently disapproved. Life then seemed to her a bright possession. We have seen that she had begun her *roman* without planning how it should end. She had, however, then meant it to end, somehow or other, happily. Now the lustre had gone from life—the tone of the work was saddened—it forboded a tragic close. But for the general reader it became, with every chapter, still more interesting; the poor child had a singularly musical gift of style—a music which lent itself naturally to pathos. Every very young writer knows how his work, if one of feeling, will color itself from the views of some truth in his innermost self; and in proportion as it does so, how his absorption in the work increases, till it becomes part and parcel of his own mind and heart. The presence of a hidden sorrow may change the fate of the beings he has created, and guide to the grave those whom, in a happier vein, he would have united at the altar. It is not till a later stage of experience and art that the writer escapes from the influence of his individual personality, and lives in existences that take no colorings from his own. Genius usually must pass through the subjective process before it gains the objective. Even a Shakespeare represents himself in the Sonnets before no trace of himself is visible in a Falstaff or a Lear.

No news of the Englishman—not a word. Isaura could not but feel that in his words, his looks, that day in her own garden, and those yet happier days at Enghien, there had been more than friendship: there had been love—love enough to justify her own pride in whispering to herself, "And I love too." But then that last parting! how changed he was—how cold! She conjectured that jealousy of Rameau might, in some degree, account for the coldness when he first entered the room, but surely not when he left; surely not when she had overpassed the reserve of her sex, and implied by signs rarely misconstrued by those who love, that he had no cause for jealousy of another. Yet he had gone—parted with her pointedly as a friend, a mere friend. How foolish she had been to think this rich ambitious foreigner could ever have meant to be more! In the occupation of her work she thought to banish his image was never absent;

there were passages in which she pleadingly addressed it, and then would cease abruptly, stifled by passionate tears. Still she fancied that the work would reunite them; that in its pages he would hear her voice and comprehend her heart. And thus all praise of the work became very, very dear to her.

At last, after many weeks, Savarin heard from Graham. The letter was dated Aix-la-Chapelle, at which the Englishman said he might yet be some time detained. In the letter Graham spoke chiefly of the new journal: in polite compliment of Savarin's own effusions; in mixed praise and condemnation of the political and social articles signed Pierre Firmin—praise of their intellectual power, condemnation of their moral cynicism. "The writer," he said, "reminds me of a passage in which Montesquieu compares the heathen philosophers to those plants which the earth produces in places that have never seen the heavens. The soil of his experience does not grow a single belief; and as no community can exist without a belief of some kind, so a politician without belief can but help to destroy; he cannot reconstruct. Such writers corrupt a society; they do not reform a system." He closed his letter with a reference to Isaura: "Do, in your reply, my dear Savarin, tell me something about your friends Signora Venosta and the Signorina, whose work, so far as yet published, I have read with admiring astonishment at the power of a female writer so young to rival the veteran practitioners of fiction in the creation of interest in imaginary characters, and in sentiments which, if they appear somewhat over-romantic and exaggerated, still touch very fine chords in human nature not awakened in our trite everyday existence.

I presume that the beauty of the *roman* had been duly appreciated by a public so refined as the Parisian, and that the name of the author is generally known. No doubt she is now much the rage of the literary circles, and her career as a writer may be considered fixed. Pray present my congratulations to the Signorina when you see her."

Savarin had been in receipt of this letter some days before he called on Isaura, and carelessly showed it to her. She took it to the window to read, in order to conceal the trembling of her hands. In a few minutes she returned it silently.

"Those Englishmen," said Savarin, "have not the heart of compliment. I am by no means flattered by what he says of my trifles, and I daresay you are still less pleased with this chilly praise of your charming tale; but the man means to be civil."

"Certainly," said Isaura, smiling faintly.

"Only think of Rameau," resumed Savarin; "on the strength of his salary in the '*Sens Commun*,' and on the *châteaux en Espagne* which he constructs thereon—he has already furnished an apartment in the Chausséed'Antin, and talks of setting up a *coupé* in order to maintain the dignity of letters when he goes to dine with the duchesses who are some day or other to invite him. Yet I admire his self-confidence though I laugh at it. A man gets on by a spring in his own mechanism, and he should always keep it wound up. Rameau will make a figure. I used to pity him. I begin to respect; nothing succeeds like success. But I see I am spoiling your morning. *Au revoir, mon enfant.*"

Left alone, Isaura brooded in a sort of mournful wonderment over the words referring to herself in Graham's letter. Read though but once, she knew them by heart. What! did he consider these characters she had represented as wholly imaginary? In one—the most prominent, the most attractive—could he detect no likeness to himself? What! did he consider so "over-romantic and exaggerated"—sentiments which couched appeals from her heart to his? Alas! in matters of sentiment it is the misfortune of us men that even the most refined of us often grate upon some sentiment in a woman, though she may not be romantic—not romantic at all, as people go,—some sentiment which she thought must be so obvious, if we cared a straw about her, and which, though we prize her above the Indies, is, by our dim, horn-eyed, masculine vision, undiscernible. It may be something in itself the airiest of trifles: the anniversary of a day in which the first kiss was interchanged, nay, of a violet gathered, a misunderstanding cleared up; and of that anniversary we remember no more than we do of our bells and coral. But she—she remembers it; it is no bells and coral to her. Of course, much is to be said in excuse of man, brute though he be. Consider the multiplicity of his occupations, the practical nature of his cares. But granting the

validity of all such excuse, there is in man an original obtuseness of fibre as regards sentiment in comparison with the delicacy of woman's. It comes, perhaps, from the same hardness of constitution which forbids us the luxury of ready tears. Thus it is very difficult for the wisest man to understand thoroughly a woman. Goethe says somewhere that the highest genius in man must have much of the woman in it. If this be true, the highest genius alone in man can comprehend and explain the nature of woman; because it is not remote from him, but an integral part of his masculine self. I am not sure, however, that it necessitates the highest genius, but rather a special idiosyncrasy in genius which the highest may or may not have. I think Sophocles a higher genius than Euripides; but Eurpides has that idiosyncrasy, and Sophocles not. I doubt whether women would accept Goethe as their interpreter with the same readiness with which they would accept Schiller. Shakespeare, no doubt, excels all poets in the comprehension of women, in his sympathy with them in the woman-part of his nature which Goethe ascribes to the highest genius; but, putting that "monster," I do not remember any English poet whom we should consider conspicuously eminent in that lore, unless it be the prose poet, now-a-days generally underrated and little read, who wrote the letters of Clarissa Harlowe. I say all this in vindication of Graham Vane, if, though a very clever man in his way, and by no mans uninstructed in human nature, he had utterly failed in comprehending the mysteries which to this poor woman-child seemed to need no key for one who really loved her. But we have said somewhere before in this book that music speaks in a language which cannot explain itself except in music. So speaks, in the human heart, much which is akin to music. Fiction (that is, poetry, whether in form of rhyme or prose) speaks thus pretty often. A reader must be more commonplace than, I trust, my gentle readers are, if he suppose that when Isaura symbolized the real hero of her thoughts in the fabled hero of her romance, she depicted him as one of whom the world could say, "That is Graham Vane." I doubt if even a male poet would so vulgarize any woman whom he thoroughly reverenced and loved. She is too sacred to him to be thus unveiled to the public stare; as the sweetest of all ancient love poets says well—

"Qui sapit in tacito gaudeat ille sinu."

But a girl, a girl in her first untold timid love, to let the world know, "*that* is the man I love and would die for!"—if such a girl be, she has no touch of the true woman-genius, and certainly she and Isaura have nothing in common. Well, then, in Isaura's invented hero, though she saw the archetypal form of Graham Vane—saw him as in her young, vague, romantic dreams, idealized, beautified, transfigured—he would have been the vainest of men if he had seen therein the reflection of himself. On the contary, he said, in the spirit of that jealousy to which he was too prone, "Alas! this, then, is some ideal, already seen, perhaps, compared to which how commonplace am I!" and thus persuading himself, no wonder that the sentiments surrounding this unrecognized archetype appeared to him over-romantic. His taste acknowledged the beauty of form which clothed them; his heart envied the ideal that inspired them. But they seemed so remote from him; they put the dreamland of the writer farther and farther from his workday real life.

In this frame of mind, then, he had written to Savarin, and the answer he received hardened it still more. Savarin had replied, as was his laudible wont in correspondence, the very day he received Graham's letter, and therefore before he had even seen Isaura. In his reply, he spoke much of the success her work had obtained; of the invitations showered upon her, and the sensation she caused in the *salons;* of her future career, with hope that she might even rival Madame de Grantmesnil some day, when her ideas became emboldened by maturer experience, and a closer study of that model of eloquent style,—saying that the young editor was evidently becoming enamored of his fair contributor; and that Madame Savarin had ventured the prediction that the Signorina's *roman* would end in the death of the heroine, and the marriage of the writer.

CHAPTER V.

And still the weeks glided on: autumn succeeded to summer, the winter to autumn; the

season of Paris was at its height. The wondrous capital seemed to repay its Imperial embellisher by the splendor and the joy of its *fêtes*. But the smiles on the face of Paris were hypocritical and hollow. The Empire itself had passed out of fashion. Grave men and impartial observers felt anxious. Napoléon had renounced *les idées Napoléoniennes*. He was passing into the category of constitutional sovereigns, and reigning, not by his old undivided prestige, but by the grace of party. The press was free to circulate complaints as to the past and demands as to the future, beneath which the present reeled—ominous of earthquake. People asked themselves if it were possible that the Empire could coexist with forms of government not imperial, yet not genuinely constitutional, with a majority daily yielding to a minority. The basis of universal suffrage was sapped. About this time the articles in the "*Sens Commun*" signed Pierre Firmin were creating not only considerable sensation, but marked effect on opinion: and the sale of the journal was immense.

Necessarily the repute and the position of Gustave Rameau, as the avowed editor of this potent journal, rose with its success. Not only his repute and position; bank-notes of considerable value were transmitted to him by the publisher, with the brief statement that they were sent by the sole proprietor of the paper as the editor's fair share of profit. The proprietor was never named, but Rameau took it for granted that it was M. Lebeau. M. Lebeau he had never seen since the day he had brought him the list of contributors, and was then referred to the publisher, whom he supposed M. Lebeau had secured, and received the first quarter of his salary in advance. The salary was a trifle compared to the extra profits thus generously volunteered. He called at Lebeau's office, and saw only the clerk, who said that his *patron* was abroad.

Prosperity produced a marked change for the better, if not in the substance of Rameau's character, at least in his manners and social converse. He no longer exhibited that restless envy of rivals, which is the most repulsive symptom of vanity diseased. He pardoned Isaura her success; nay, he was even pleased at it. The nature of her work did not clash with his own kind of writing. It was so thoroughly woman-like, that one could not compare it to a man's. Moreover, that success had contributed largely to the profits by which he had benefited, and to his renown as editor of the journal which accorded place to this new-found genius. But there was a deeper and more potent cause for sympathy with the success of his fair young contributor. He had imperceptibly glided into love with her—a love very different from that with which poor Julie Caumartin flattered herself she had inspired the young poet. Isaura was one of those women for whom, even in natures the least chivalric, love—however ardent—cannot fail to be accompanied with a certain reverence, —the reverence with which the ancient knighthood, in its love for women, honored the ideal purity of womanhood itself. Till then Rameau had never revered any one.

On her side, brought so frequently into communication with the young conductor of the journal in which she wrote, Isaura entertained for him a friendly, almost sister-like affection.

I do not think that, even if she had never known the Englishman, she would have really become in love with Rameau, despite the picturesque beauty of his countenance, and the congeneality of literary pursuits; but perhaps she might have *fancied* herself in love with him. And till one, whether man or woman, has known real love, fancy is readily mistaken for it. But little as she had seen of Graham, and that little not in itself wholly favorable to him, she knew in her heart of hearts that his image would never be replaced by one equally dear. Perhaps in those qualities that placed him in opposition to her she felt his attractions. The poetical in woman exaggerates the worth of the practical in man. Still for Rameau her exquisitely kind and sympathizing nature conceived one of those sentiments which in woman are almost angel-like. We have seen in her letters to Madame de Grantmesnil, that from the first he inspired her with a compassionate interest; then the compassion was checked by her perception of his more unamiable and envious attributes. But now those attributes, if still existent, had ceased to be apparent to her, and the compassion became unalloyed. Indeed, it was thus so far increased, that it was impossible for any friendly observer to look at the beautiful face of this youth, prematurely wasted and worn, without

the kindliness of pity. His prosperity had brightened and sweetened the expression of that face, but it had not effaced the vestiges of decay; rather perhaps deepened them, for the duties of his post necessitated a regular labor, to which he had been unaccustomed, and the regular labor necessitated, or seemed to him to necessitate, an increase of fatal stimulants. He imbibed absinthe with everything he drank, and to absinthe he united opium. This, of course, Isaura knew not, any more than she knew of his *liaison* with the "Ondine" of his muse; she saw only the increasing delicacy of his face and form, contrasted by his increased geniality and liveliness of spirits, and the contrast saddened her.

Intellectually, too, she felt for him compassion. She recognized and respected in him the yearnings of a genius too weak to perform a tithe of what, in the arrogance of youth, it promised to its ambition. She saw, too, those struggles between a higher and a lower self, to which a weak degree of genius, united with a strong degree of arrogance, is so often subjected. Perhaps she over-estimated the degree of genius, and what, if rightly guided, it could do; but she did, in the desire of her own heavenlier instinct, aspire to guide it heavenward. And, as if she were twenty years older than himself, she obeyed that desire in remonstrating and warning and urging, and the young man took all these "preachments" with a pleased submissive patience. Such, as the new year dawned upon the grave of the old one, was the position between these two. And nothing more was heard from Graham Vane.

CHAPTER VI.

It has now become due to Graham Vane, and to his place in the estimation of my readers, to explain somewhat more distinctly the nature of the quest in prosecution of which he had sought the aid of the Parisian police, and, under an assumed name, made the acquaintance of M. Lebeau.

The best way of discharging this duty will perhaps be to place before the reader the contents of the letter which passed under Graham's eyes on the day in which the heart of the writer ceased to beat.

"*Confidential.*

"*To be opened immediately after my death, and before the perusal of my will.*

"*Richard King.*

"*To* Graham Vane, Esq.

"My dear Graham,—By the direction on the envelope of this letter, 'Before the perusal of my will,' I have wished to save you from the disappointment you would naturally experience if you learned my bequest without being prevised of the conditions which I am about to impose upon your honor. You will see ere you conclude this letter that you are the only man living to whom I could intrust the secret it contains and the task it enjoins.

"You are aware that I was not born to the fortune that passed to me by the death of a distant relation, who had, in my earlier youth, children of his own. I was an only son, left an orphan at the age of sixteen with a very slender pittance. My guardians designed me for the medical profession. I began my studies at Edinburgh, and was sent to Paris to complete them. It so chanced that there I lodged in the same house with an artist named Auguste Duval, who, failing to gain his livelihood as a painter, in what—for his style was ambitious—is termed the Historical School, had accepted the humbler calling of a drawing-master. He had practised in that branch of the profession for several years at Tours, having a good *clientele* among English families settled there. This *clientele*, as he frankly confessed, he had lost from some irregularities of conduct. He was not a bad man, but of convivial temper, and easily led into temptation. He had removed to Paris a few months before I made his acquaintance He obtained a few pupils, and often lost them as soon as gained. He was unpunctual and addicted to drink. But he had a small pension, accorded to him, he was wont to say mysteriously, by some high-born kinsfolk, too proud to own connection with a drawing-master, and on the condition that he should never name them. He never did name them to me, and I do not know to this day whether the story of this noble relationship was true or false. A pension, however, he did receive quarterly from some person or other, and it was an unhappy provision for him. It tended to make him an idler in his proper calling; and whenever he received the payment he spent it in debauch, to the neglect, while it lasted, of his pupils. This man had residing with him a young daughter, singularly beautiful. You may divine the rest. I fell in love with her—a love deepened by the compassion with which she inspired me. Her father left her so frequently, that, living on the same floor, we saw much of each other. Parent and child were often in great need—lacking even fuel or food. Of course I assisted them to the utmost of my scanty means. Much as I was fascinated by Louise Duval, I was not blind to great defects in her character. She was capricious, vain, aware of her beauty, and sighing for the pleasures or the gauds beyound her reach. I knew that she did not love me—there was little, indeed, to captivate her fancy in a poor, threadbare medical student—and yet I fondly imagined that my own persevering devotion would at length win her affections. I spoke to her father more than once of my hope some day to make Louise my wife. This hope, I must frankly acknowledge, he never encouraged. On the contrary, he treated

it with scorn,—'His child with her beauty would look much higher,' but he continued all the same to accept my assistance, and to sanction my visits. At length my slender purse was pretty well exhausted, and the luckless drawing-master was so harassed with petty debts that farther credit became impossible. At this time I happened to hear from a fellow-student that his sister, who was the principal of a lady's school in Cheltenham, had commissioned him to look out for a first-rate teacher of drawing, with whom her elder pupils could converse in French, but who should be sufficiently adquainted with English to make his instructions intelligible to the young. The salary was liberal, the school large and of high repute, and his appointment to it would open to an able teacher no inconsiderable connection among private families. I communicated this intelligence to Duval. He caught at it eagerly. He had learned at Tours to speak English fluently; and as his professional skill was of high order, and he was popular with several eminent artists, he obtained certificates as to his talents, which my fellow-student forwarded to England with specimens of Duval's drawings. In a few days the offer of an engagement arrived, was accepted, and Duval and his daughter set out for Cheltenham. At the eve of their departure, Louise, profoundly dejected at the prospect of banishment to a foreign country, and placing no trust in her father's reform to steady habits, evinced a tenderness for me hitherto new—she wept bitterly. She allowed me to believe that her tears flowed at the thought of parting with me, and even besought me to accompany them to Cheltenham—if only for a few days. You may suppose how delightedly I complied with the request. Duval had been about a week at the watering-place, and was discharging the duties he had undertaken with such unwonted steadiness and regularity that I began sorrowfully to feel I had no longer an excuse for not returning to my studies at Paris, when the poor teacher was seized with a fit of paralysis. He lost the power of movement, and his mind was affected. The medical attendant called in said that he might linger thus for some time, but that even if he recovered his intellect, which was more than doubtful, he would never be able to resume his profession. I could not leave Louise in circumstances so distressing—I remained. The little money Duval had brought from Paris was now exhausted: and when the day on which he had been in the habit of receiving his quarter's pension came round, Louise was unable even to conjecture how it was to be applied for. It seems that he had always gone for it in person, but to whom he went was a secret which he had never divulged. And at this critical juncture his mind was too enfeebled even to comprehend us when we inquired. I had already drawn from the small capital on the interest of which I had maintained myself; I now drew out most of the remainder. But this was a resource that could not last long, Nor could I, without seriously compromising Louise's character, be constantly in the house with a girl so young, and whose sole legitimate protector was thus afflicted. There seemed but one alternative to that of abandoning her altogether—viz., to make her my wife, to conclude the studies necessary to obtain my diploma, and purchase some partnership in a small country practice with the scanty surplus that might be left of my capital. I placed this option before Louise timidly, for I could not bear the thought of forcing her inclinations. She seemed much moved by what she called my generosity, she consented—we were married. I was, as you may conceive, wholly ignorant of French law. We were married according to the English ceremony and the Protestant ritual. Shortly after our marriage we all three returned to Paris, taking an apartment in a quarter remote from that in which we had before lodged, in order to avoid any harassment to which such small creditors as Duval had left behind him might subject us. I resumed my studies with redoubled energy, and Louise was necessarily left much alone with her poor father in the daytime. The defects in her character became more and more visible. She reproached me for the solitude to which I condemned her; our poverty galled her; she had no kind greeting for me when I returned at evening, wearied out. Before marriage she had not loved me—after marriage, alas! I fear she hated. We had been returned to Paris some months when poor Duval died: he had never recovered his faculties, nor had we ever learned from whom his pension had been received. Very soon after her father's death I observed a singular change in the humor and manner of Louise. She was no longer peevish, irascible, reproachful; but taciturn and thoughtful. She seemed to me under the influence of some suppressed excitement: her cheeks flushed and her eye abstracted. At length, one evening when I returned I found her gone. She did not come back that night nor the next day. It was impossible for me to conjecture what had become of her. She had no friends, so far as I knew—no one had visited at our squalid apartment. The poor house in which we lodged had no *concierge* whom I could question; but the ground-floor was occupied by a small tobacconist's shop, and the woman at the counter told me that for some days before my wife's disappearance, she had observed her pass the shop window in going out in the afternoon and returning towards the evening, Two terrible conjectures beset me: either in her walk she had met some admirer, with whom she had fled; or, unable to bear the companionship and poverty of a union which she had begun to loathe, she had gone forth to drown herself in the Seine. On the third day from her flight I received the letter I enclose. Possibly the handwriting may serve you as a guide in the mission I intrust to you:—

'MONSIEUR,—You have deceived me vilely—taken advantage of my inexperienced youth and friendless position to decoy me into an illegal marriage. My only consolation under my calamity and disgrace is, that I am at least free from a detested bond. You will not see me again—it is idle to attempt to do so. I have obtained refuge with relations whom I have been fortunate enough to discover, and to whom I intrust my fate. And even if you could learn the shelter I have sought and have the audacity to molest me, you would but subject yourself to the chastisement you so richly deserve.

LOUISE DUVAL.'

"At the perusal of this cold-hearted, ungrateful letter, the love I had felt for this woman—already much shaken by her wayward and perverse temper—vanished from my heart, never to return. But as an honest man, my conscience was terribly stung. Could it be possible that I had unknowingly deceived her—that our marriage was not legal?

"When I recovered from the stun which was the first effect of her letter, I sought the opinion of an *avoue* in the neighborhood, named Sartiges, and, to my dismay I learned that while I, marrying according to the cus-

toms of my own country, was legally bound to Louise in England, and could not marry another, the marriage was in all ways illegal for her,—being without the consent of her relations while she was under age—without the ceremonials of the Roman Catholic Church, to which, though I never heard any profession of religious belief from her or her father, it might fairly be presumed that she belonged—and, above all, without the form of civil contract which is indispensable to the legal marriage of a French subject.

"The *avoue* said that the marriage, therefore, in itself was null, and that Louise could, without incurring legal penalties for bigamy, marry again in France according to the French laws; but that, under the circumstances, it was probable that her next of kin would apply on her behalf to the proper court for the formal annulment of the marriage, which would be the most effectual mode of saving her from any molestation on my part, and remove all possible question hereafter as to her single state and absolute right to remarry. I had better remain quiet, and wait for intimation of further proceedings. I knew nor what else to do, and necessarily submitted.

"From this wretched listlessness of mind, alternated now by vehement resentment against Louise, now by the reproach of my own sense of honor in leaving that honor in so questionable a point of view, I was aroused by a letter from the distant kinsman by whom hitherto I had been so neglected. In the previous year he had lost one of his two children; the other was just dead: no nearer relation now surviving stood between me and my chance of inheritance from him. He wrote word of his domestic affliction with a manly sorrow which touched me, said that his health was failing, and begged me, as soon as possible, to come and visit him in Scotland. I went, and continued to reside with him till his death, some months afterwards. By his will I succeeded to his ample fortune on condition of taking his name.

"As soon as the affairs connected with this inheritance permitted, I returned to Paris, and again saw M. Sartiges. I had never heard from Louise, nor from any one connected with her since the letter you have read. No steps had been taken to annul the marriage, and sufficient time had elapsed to render it improbable that such steps would be taken now. But if no such steps were taken, however free from the marriage-bond Louise might be, it clearly remained binding on myself.

"At my request, M. Sartiges took the most vigorous measures that occurred to him to ascertain where Louise was, and what and who was the relation with whom she asserted she had found refuge. The police were employed; advertisements were issued, concealing names, but sufficiently clear to be intelligible to Louise if they came under her eye, and to the effect that if any informality in our marriage existed, she was implored for her own sake to remove it by a second ceremonial—answer to be addressed to the *avoue*. No answer came; the police had hitherto failed of discovering her, but were sanguine of success, when a few weeks after these advertisements a package reached M. Sartiges, enclosing the certificates annexed to this letter, of the death of Louise Duval at Munich. The certificates, as you will see, are to appearance officially attested and unquestionably genuine. So they were considered by M. Sartiges as well as by myself. Here, then, all inquiry ceased—the police were dismissed. I was free. By little and little I overcame the painful impressions which my illstarred union and the announcement of Louise's early death bequeathed. Rich, and of active mind, I learned to dismiss the trials of my youth as a gloomy dream. I entered into public life; I made myself a creditable position; became acquainted with your aunt; we were wedded, and the beauty of her nature embellished mine. Alas, alas! two years after our marriage—nearly five years after I had received the certificates of Louise's death—I and your aunt made a summer excursion into the country of the Rhine; on our return we rested at Aix la Chapelle. One day while there I was walking alone in the environs of the town, when, on the road, a little girl, seemingly about five years old, in chase of a butterfly, stumbled and fell just before my feet; I took her up, and as she was crying more from the shock of the fall than any actual hurt, I was still trying my best to comfort her, when a lady some paces behind her came up, and in taking the child from my arms as I was bending over her, thanked me in a voice that made my heart stand still; I looked up, and beheld Louise.

"It was not till I had convulsively clasped her hand and uttered her name that she recognized me. I was, no doubt, the more altered of the two—prosperity and happiness had left little trace of the needy, careworn, threadbare student. But if she were the last to recognize, she was the first to recover self-possession. The expresslon of her face became hard and set. I cannot pretend to repeat with any verbal accuracy the brief converse that took place between us, as she placed the child on the grass bank beside the path, bade her stay there quietly, and walked on with me some paces as if she did not wish the child to hear what was said.

"The purport of what passed was to this effect: She refused to explain the certificates of her death further than that, becoming aware of what she called the 'persecution' of the advertisements issued and inquiries instituted, she had caused those documents to be sent to the address given in the advertisement, in order to terminate all further molestation. But how they could have been obtained, or by what art so ingeniously forged as to deceive the acuteness of a practised lawyer, I know not to this day. She declared, indeed, that she was now happy, in easy circumstances, and that if I wished to make some reparation for the wrong I had done her, it would be to leave her in peace; and in case—which was not likely—we ever met again, to regard and treat her as a stranger; that she, on her part, never would molest me, and that the certified death of Louise Duval left me as free to marry again as she considered herself to be.

"My mind was so confused, so bewildered, while she thus talked, that I did not attempt to interrupt her. The blow had so crushed me that I scarcely struggled under it; only, as she turned to leave me, I suddenly recollected that the child, when taken from my arms, had called her '*Maman*,' and, judging by the apparent age of the child, it must have been born but a few months after Louise had left me—that it must be mine. And so, in my dreary woe, I faltered out—'But what of your infant? Surely that has on me a claim that you relinquish for yourself. You were not unfaithful to me while you deemed you were my wife?'

"'Heavens! Can you insult me by such a doubt? No!' she cried out, impulsively and haughtily. 'But as I was not legally your wife, the child is not legally yours; it is mine, and only mine. Nevertheless, if you wish to claim it,'—here she paused as in doubt. I saw at once that she was prepared to resign to me the child

if I had urged her to do so. I must own, with a pang of remorse, that I recoiled from such a proposal. What could I do with the child? How explain to my wife the cause of my interest in it? If only a natural child of mine, I should have shrunk from owning to Janet a youthful error. But, as it was,—the child by a former marriage,—the former wife still living!—my blood ran cold with dread. And if I did take the child—invent what story I might as to its parentage, should I not expose myself, expose Janet, to terrible constant danger? The mother's natural affection might urge her at any time to seek tidings of the child, and in so doing she might easily discover my new name, and, perhaps years hence, establish on me her own claim.

"'No, I could not risk such perils,' I replied, sullenly. 'You say rightly; the child is yours—only yours.' I was about to add an offer of pecuniary provision for it, but Louise had already turned scornfully towards the bank on which she had left the infant. I saw her snatch from the child's hand some wild flowers the poor thing had been gathering; and how often have I thought of the rude way in which she did it—not as a mother who loves her child. Just then other passengers appeared on the road—two of them I knew—an English couple very intimate with Lady Janet and myself. The stopped to accost me, while Louise passed by with the infant towards the town. I turned in the opposite direction, and strove to collect my thoughts. Terrible as was the discovery thus suddenly made, it was evident that Louise had as strong an interest as myself to conceal it. There was little chance that it would ever be divulged. Her dress and that of the child were those of persons in the richer classes of life. After all, doubtless, the child needed not pecuniary assistance from me, and was surely best off under the mother's care. Thus I sought to comfort and to delude myself.

"The next day Janet and I left Aix-la-Chapelle and returned to England. But it was impossible for me to banish the dreadful thought that Janet was not legally my wife; that could she even guess the secret lodged in my breast she would be lost to me for ever, even though she died of the separation (you know well how tenderly she loved me). My nature underwent a silent revolution. I had previously cherished the ambition common to most men in public life,—the ambition for fame, for place, for power. That ambition left me; I shrank from the thought of becoming too well known lest Louise or her connections, as yet ignorant of my new name, might more easily learn what the world knew—viz., that I had previously borne another name—the name of her husband—and finding me wealthy and honored, might hereafter be tempted to claim for herself or her daughter the ties she abjured for both while she deemed me poor and despised. But partly my conscience, partly the influence of the angel by my side, compelled me to seek whatever means of doing good to others position and circumstances placed at my disposal. I was alarmed when even such quiet exercise of mind and fortune acquired a sort of celebrity. How painfully I shrank from it! The world attributed my dread of publicity to unaffected modesty. The world praised me, and I knew myself an impostor. But the years stole on. I heard no more of Louise or her child, and my fears gradually subsided. Yet I was consoled when the two children born to me by Janet died in their infancy. Had they lived, who can tell whether something might not have transpired to prove them illegitimate?

"I must hasten on. At last came the great and crushing calamity of my life: I lost the woman who was my all in all. At least she was spared the discovery that would have deprived me of the right of tending her deathbed, and leaving within her tomb a place vacant for myself.

"But after the first agonies that followed her loss, the conscience I had so long sought to tranquillize became terribly reproachful. Louise had forfeited all right to my consideration, but my guiltless child had not done so. Did it live still? If so, was it not the heir to my fortunes—the only child left to me? True, I have the absolute right to dispose of my wealth: it is not in land; it is not entailed; but was not the daughter I had forsaken morally the first claimant? Was no reparation due to her? You remember that my physician ordered me, some little time after your aunt's death, to seek a temporary change of scene. I obeyed, and went away no one knew whither. Well, I repaired to Paris; there I sought M. Sartiges, the *avoue*. I found he had been long dead. I discovered his executors, and inquired if any papers or correspondence between Richard Macdonald and himself many years ago were in existence. All such documents, with others not returned to correspondents at his decease, had been burned by his desire. No possible clue to the whereabouts of Louise, should any have been gained since I last saw her, was left. What then to do I knew not. I did not dare to make inquiries through strangers, which, if discovering my child, might also bring to light a marriage that would have dishonored the memory of my lost saint. I returned to England, feeling that my days were numbered. It is to you that I transmit the task of those researches which I could not institute. I bequeath to you, with the exception of trifling legacies and donations to public charities, the whole of my fortune. But you will understand by this letter that it is to be held on a trust which I cannot specify in my will. I could not, without dishonoring the venerated name of your aunt, indicate as the heiress of my wealth a child by a wife living at the time I married Janet. I cannot form any words for such a devise which would not arouse gossip and suspicion, and furnish ultimately a clue to the discovery I would shun. I calculate that, after all deductions, the sum that will devolve to you will be about £220,000. That which I mean to be absolutely and at once yours is the comparatively trifling legacy of £20,000. If Louise's child be not living, or if you find full reason to suppose that, despite appearances, the child is not mine, the whole of my fortune lapses to you: but should Louise be surviving and need pecuniary aid, you will contrive that she may have such an annuity as you may deem fitting, without learning whence it come.

"You perceive that it is your object, if possible, even more than mine, to preserve free from slur the name and memory of her who was to you a second mother. All ends we desire would be accomplished could you, on discovering my lost child, feel that, without constraining your inclinations, you could make her your *wife*. She would then naturally share with you my fortune, and all claims of justice and duty would be quietly appeased. She would now be of age suitable to yours. When I saw her at Aix she gave promise of inheriting no small share of her mother's beauty. If Louise's assurance of her easy circumstances were true, her daughter has possibly been educated and reared with tenderness and care. You have already

assured me that you have no prior attachment. But if, on discovering this child, you find her already married, or one whom you could not love nor esteem, I leare it implicitly to your honor and judgment to determine what share of the £200,000 left in your hands should be consigned to her. She may have been corrupted by her mother's principles. She may—Heaven forbid!—have fallen into evil courses, and wealth would be misspent in her hands. In that case a competence sufficing to save her from further degradation, from the temptations of poverty, would be all that I desire you to devote from my wealth. On the contrary, you may find in her one who, in all respects, ought to be my chief inheritor. All this I leave in full confidence to you, as being, of all the men I know, the one who unites the highest sense of honor with the largest share of practical sense and knowledge of life. The main difficulty, whatever this lost girl may derive from my substance, will be in devising some means to convey it to her, so that neither she nor those around her may trace the bequest to me. She can never be acknowledged as my child—never! Your reverence for the beloved dead forbids that. This difficulty your clear strong sense must overcome: mine is blinded by the shades of death. You, too, will deliberately consider how to institute the inquiries after mother and child so as not to betray our secret. This will require great caution. You will probably commence at Paris, through the agency of the police, to whom you will be very guarded in your communications. It is most unfortunate that I have no miniature of Louise, and that any description of her must be so vague that it may not serve to discover her; but such as it is it may prevent your mistaking for her some other of her name. Louise was above the common height, and looked taller than she was, with the peculiar combination of very dark hair, very fair complexion, and light grey eyes. She would now be somewhat under the age of forty. She was not without accomplishments, derived from the companionship with her father. She spoke English fluently; she drew with taste, and even with talent. You will see the prudence of confining research at first to Louise, rather than to the child who is the principal object of it; for it is not till you can ascertain what has become of her that you can trust the accuracy of any information respecting the daughter. whom I assume, perhaps after all erroneously, to be mine. Though Louise talked with such levity of holding herself free to marry, the birth of her child might be sufficient injury to her reputation to become a serious obstacle to such second nuptials, not having taken formal steps to annul her marriage with myself. If not thus re-married there would be no reason why she should not resume her maiden name of Duval, as she did in the signature of her letter to me: finding that I had ceased to molest her by the inquiries, to elude which she had invented the false statement of her death. It seems probable, therefore, that she is residing somewhere in Paris, and in the name of Duval. Of course the burden of uncertainty as to your future cannot be left to oppress you for an indefinite length of time. If at the end, say, of two years, your researches have wholly failed, consider three-fourths of my whole fortune to have passed to you, and put by the fourth to accumulate, should the child afterwards be discovered, and satisfy your judgment as to her claims on me as her father. Should she not, it will be a reserve fund for your own children. But oh, if my child could be found in time! and oh, if she be all that could win your heart, and be the wife you would select from free choice! I can say no more. Pity me, and judge leniently of Janet's husband.

"R. K."

The key to Graham's conduct is now given;—the deep sorrow that took him to the tomb of the aunt he so revered, and whose honored memory was subjected to so great a risk; the slightness of change in his expenditure and mode of life, after an inheritance supposed to be so ample; the abnegation of his political ambition; the subject of his inquiries, and the cautious reserve imposed upon them; above all, the position towards Isaura in which he was so cruelly placed.

Certainly, his first thought in revolving the conditions of his trust had been that of marriage with this lost child of Richard King's, should she be discovered single, disengaged, and not repulsive to his inclinations. Tacitly he subscribed to the reasons for this course alleged by the deceased. It was the simplest and readiest plan of uniting justice to the rightful inheritor with care for a secret so important to the honor of his aunt, of Richard King himself—his benefactor,—of the illustrious house from which Lady Janet had sprung. Perhaps, too, the consideration that by this course a fortune so useful to his career was secured, was not without influence on the the mind of a man naturally ambitious. But on that consideration he forbade himself to dwell. He put it away from him as a sin. Yet, to marriage with any one else, until his mission was fulfilled, and the uncertainty as to the extent of his fortune was dispelled, there interposed grave practical obstacles. How could be honestly present himself to a girl and to her parents in the light of a rich man, when in reality he might be but a poor man? how could he refer to any lawyer the conditions which rendered impossible any settlement that touched a shilling of the large sum which at any day he might have to transfer to another? Still, when once fully conscious how deep was the love with which Isaura had inspired him, the idea of wedlock with the daughter of Richard King, if she yet lived and was single, became inadmissable. The orphan condition of the young Italian smoothed away the obstacles to proposals of marriage which would have embarrassed his addresses to girls of his own rank, and with parents who would have

demanded settlements. And if he had found Isaura alone on that day on which he had seen her last, he would doubtless have yielded to the voice of his heart, avowed his love, wooed her own, and committed both to the tie of betrothal. We have seen how rudely such yearnings of his heart were repelled on that last interview. His English prejudices were so deeply rooted, that, even if he had been wholly free from the trust bequeathed to him, he would have recoiled from marriage with a girl, who in the ardor for notoriety, could link herself with such associates as Gustave Rameau, by habits a Bohemian and by principles a Socialist.

In flying from Paris, he embraced the resolve to banish all thought of wedding Isaura, and to devote himself sternly to the task which had so sacred a claim upon him. Not that he could endure the idea of marrying another, even if the lost heiress should be all that his heart could have worshipped, had that heart been his own to give; but he was impatient of the burden heaped on him,—of the fortune which might not be his, of the uncertainty which paralyzed all his ambitious schemes for the future.

Yet, strive as he would—and no man could strive more resolutely—he could not succeed in banishing the image of Isaura. It was with him always; and with it a sense of irreparable loss, of a terrible void, of a pining anguish.

And the success of his inquires at Aix-la-Chapelle, while sufficient to detain him in the place, was so slight, and advanced by such slow degrees, that it furnished no continued occupation to his restless mind. M. Renard was acute and painstaking. But it was no easy matter to obtain any trace of a Parisian visitor to so popular a spa so many years ago. The name Duval, too, was so common that at Aix, as we have seen at Paris, time was wasted in the chase of a Duval who proved not to be the lost Louise. At last M. Renard chanced on a house in which, in the year 1849, two ladies from Paris had lodged for three weeks. One was named Madame Duval, the other Madame Marigny. They were both young, both very handsome, and much of the same height and coloring. But Madame Marigny was the handsomer of the two. Madame Duval frequented the gaming-tables, and was apparently of very lively temper. Madame Marigny lived very quietly, rarely or never stirred out, and seemed in delicate health. She however quitted the apartment somewhat abruptly, and, to the best of the lodging-house keeper's recollection, took rooms in the country near Aix—she could not remember where. About two months after the departure of Madame Marigny, Madame Duval also left Aix, and in company with a French gentleman who had visited her much of late—a handsome man of striking appearance. The lodging-house keeper did not know what or who he was. She remembered that he used to be announced to Madame Duval by the name of M. Achille. Madame Duval had never been seen again by the lodging-house keeper after she had left. But Madame Marigny she had once seen, nearly five years after she had quitted the lodgings—seen her by chance at the railway station, recognized her at once, and accosted her offering her the old apartment. Madame Marigny had, however, briefly replied that she was only at Aix for a few hours, and should quit it the same day.

The inquiry now turned towards Madame Marigny. The date on which the lodging-house keeper had last seen her coincided with the year in which Richard King had met Louise. Possibly, therefore, she might have accompanied the later to Aix at that time, and could, if found, give information as to her subsequent history and present whereabouts.

After a tedious search throughout all the environs of Aix, Graham himself came, by the merest accident, upon the vestiges of Louise's friend. He had been wandering alone in the country round Aix, when a violent thunderstorm drove him to ask shelter in the house of a small farmer, situated in a field, a little off the byway which he had taken. While waiting for the cessation of the storm, and drying his clothes by the fire in a room that adjoined the kitchen, he entered into conversation with the farmer's wife, a pleasant, well-mannered person, and made some complimentary observation on a small sketch of the house in water-colors that hung upon the wall. "Ah," said the farmer's wife," "that was done by a French lady who lodged here many years ago. She drew very prettily, poor thing."

"A lady who lodged here many years ago—how many?"

Well, I guess somewhere about twenty."

"Ah, indeed! Was it a Madame Marigny?"

"*Bon Dieu!* That was indeed her name. Did you know her? I should be so glad to hear she is well and—I hope—happy."

"I do not know where she is now, and am making inquiries to ascertain. Pray help me. How long did Madame Marigny lodge with you?"

"I think pretty well two months; yes, two months. She left a month after her confinement."

"She was confined here?"

"Yes. When she first came, I had no idea that she was *enciente*. She had a pretty figure, and no one would have guessed it, in the way she wore her shawl. Indeed I only began to suspect it a few days before it happened; and that was so suddenly, that all was happily over before we could send for the *accoucheur*."

"And the child lived?—A girl or a boy?"

"A girl—the prettiest baby."

"Did she take the child with her when she went?"

"No; it was put out to nurse with a niece of my husband's who was confined about the same time. Madame paid liberally in advance, and continued to send money half-yearly, till she came herself and took away the little girl."

"When was that?—a little less than five years after she had left it?"

"Why, you know all about it, monsieur; yes, not quite five years after. She did not come to see me, which I thought unkind, but she sent me, though my niece-in-law, a real gold watch and a shawl. Poor dear lady—for lady she was all over—with proud ways, and would not bear to be questioned. But I am sure she was none of your French light ones, but an honest wife like myself, although she never said so."

"And have you no idea where she was all the five years she was away, or where she went after reclaiming her child?"

"No, indeed, Monsieur."

"But her remittances for the infant must have been made by letters, and the letters would have had post-marks?"

"Well, I daresay: I am no scholar myself. But suppose you see Marie Hubert, that is my niece-in-law, perhaps she has kept the envelopes."

"Where does Madame Hubert live?"

"It is just a league off by the short path; you can't miss the way. Her husband has a bit of land of his own, but he is also a carrier—'Max Hubert, carrier,'—written over the door, just opposite the first church you get to. The rain has ceased, but it may be too far for you to-day."

"Not a bit of it. Many thanks."

"But if you find out the dear lady and see her, do tell her how pleased I should be to hear good news of her and the little one."

Graham strode on under the clearing skies to the house indicated. He found Madame Hubert at home, and ready to answer all questions; but, alas! she had not the envelopes. Madame Marigny, on removing the child, had asked for all the envelopes or letters, and carried them away with her. Madame Hubert, who was a little of a scholor as her aunt-in-law was, had never paid much attention to the post-marks on the envelopes; and the only one that she did remember was the first, that contained a bank-note, and that post-mark was "Vienna."

"But did not Madame Marigny's letters ever give you an address to which to write with news of her child?"

"I don't think she cared much for her child, Monsieur. She kissed it very coldly when she came to take it away. I told the poor infant that that was her own mamma; and Madame said, 'Yes, you may call me *maman*,' in a tone of voice—well, not at all like that of a mother. She brought with her a little bag which contained some fine clothes for the child, and was very impatient till the child had got them on."

"Are you quite sure it was the same lady who left the child?"

"Oh, there is no doubt of that. She was certainly *très belle*, but I did not fancy her as aunt did. She carried her head very high, and looked rather scornful. However, I must say she behaved very generously."

"Still you have not answered my question whether her letters contained no address."

"She never wrote more than two letters. One enclosing the first remittance was but a few lines, saying that if the child was well and thriving, I need not write; but if it died or became dangerously ill, I might at any time write a line to Madame M——, *Poste Restante*, Vienna. She was travelling about, but the

letter would be sure to reach her sooner or later. The only other letter I had was to apprise me that she was coming to remove the child, and might be expected in three days after the receipt of her letter."

"And all the other communications from her were merely remittances in blank envelopes?"

"Exactly so."

Graham finding he could learn no more, took his departure. On his way home, meditating the new idea that his adventure that day suggested, he resolved to proceed at once, accompanied by M. Renard, to Munich, and there learn what particulars could be yet ascertained respecting those certificates of the death of Louise Duval to which (sharing Richard King's very natural belief that they had been skilfully forged) he had hitherto attached no importance.

CHAPTER VII.

No satisfactory result attended the inquiries made at Munich, save indeed this certainty—the certificates attesting the decease of some person calling herself Louise Duval had not been forged. They were indubitably genuine. A lady bearing that name had arrived at one of the principal hotels late in the evening, and had there taken handsome rooms. She was attended by no servant, but accompanied by a gentleman, who, however, left the hotel as soon as he had seen her lodged to her satisfaction. The books of the hotel still retained the entry of her name—Madame Duval, *Française rentiere*. On comparing the handwriting of this entry with the letter from Richard King's first wife, Graham found it differ; but then it was not certain, though probable, that the entry had been written by the alleged Madame Duval herself. She was visited the next day by the same gentleman who had accompanied her on arriving. He dined and spent the evening with her. But no one at the hotel could remember what was the gentleman's name, nor even if he were announced by any name. He never called again. Two days afterwards, Madame Duval was taken ill; a doctor was sent for, and attended her till her death. This doctor was easily found. He remembered the case perfectly—congestion of the lungs, apparently caused by cold caught on her journey. Fatal symptoms rapidly manifested themselves, and she died on the third day from the seizure. She was a young and handsome woman. He had asked her during her short illness if he should not write to her friends—if there were no one she would wish to be sent for. She replied that there was only one friend, to whom she had already written, and who would arrive in a day or two. And on inquiring, it appeared that she had written such a letter, and taken it herself to the post on the morning of the day she was taken ill.

She had in her purse not a large sum, but money enough to cover all her expenses, including those of her funeral, which, according to the law in force at the place, followed very quickly on her decease. The arrival of the friend to whom she had written being expected, her effects were, in the meantime, sealed up. The day after her death, a letter arrived for her, which was opened. It was evidently written by a man, and apparently by a lover. It expressed an impassioned regret that the writer was unavoidably prevented returning to Munich so soon as he had hoped, but trusted to see his dear *bouton de rose* in the course of the following week; it was only signed Achille, and gave no address. Two or three days after, a lady, also young and handsome, arrived at the hotel, and inquired for Madame Duval. She was greatly shocked at hearing of her decease. When sufficiently recovered to bear being questioned as to Madame Duval's relations and position, she appeared confused; said, after much pressing, that she was no relation to the deceased; that she believed Madame Duval had no relations with whom she was on friendly terms, at least she had never heard her speak of any; and that her own acquaintance with the deceased, though cordial, was very recent. She could or would not give any clue to the writer of the letter signed Achille, and she herself quitted Munich that evening, leaving the impression that Madame Duval had been one of those ladies who, in adopting a course of life at variance with conventional regulations, are repudiated by their relations, and probably drop even their rightful names.

Achille never appeared; but a few days after, a lawyer at Munich received a letter from another at Vienna, requesting, in com-

pliance with a client's instructions, the formal certificates of Louise Duval's death. These were sent as directed, and nothing more about the ill-fated woman was heard of. After the expiration of the time required by law, the seals was removed from the effects, which consisted of two *malles* and a dressing-case. But they only contained the articles appertaining to a lady's wardrobe or toilet. No letters—not even another note from Achille—no clue, in short, to the family or antecedents of the deceased. What then had become of these effects, no one at the hotel could give a clear or satisfactory account. It was said by the mistress of the hotel, rather sullenly, that they had, she supposed, been sold by her predecessor, and by order of the authorities, for the benefit of the poor.

If the lady who had represented herself as Louise Duval's acquaintance had given her own name, which doubtless she did, no one recollected it. It was not entered in the books of the hotel, for she had not lodged there; nor did it appear that she had allowed time for formal examination by the civil authorities. In fact, it was clear that poor Louise Duval had been considered as an adventuress by the hotel-keeper and the medical attendant at Munich; and her death had excited so little interest, that it was strange that even so many particulars respecting it could be gleaned.

After a prolonged but fruitless stay at Munich, Graham and M. Renard repaired to Vienna; there, at least, Madame Marigny had given an address, and there she might be heard of.

At Vienna, however, no research availed to discover a trace of any such person, and in despair Graham returned to England in the January of 1870, and left the further prosecution of his inquiries to M. Renard, who, though obliged to transfer himself to Paris for a time, promised that he would leave no stone unturned for the discovery of Madame Marigny; and Graham trusted to that assurance when M. Renard, rejecting half of the large gratuity offered him, added, "*Je suis Français;* this with me has ceased to be an affair of money; it has become an affair that involves my *amour propre.*"

CHAPTER VIII.

If Graham Vane had been before caressed and courted for himself, he was more than ever appreciated by polite society, now that he added the positive repute of wealth to that of a promising intellect. Fine ladies said that Graham Vane was a match for any girl. Eminent politicians listened to him with a more attentive respect, and invited him to selecter dinner-parties. His cousin the Duke urged him to announce his candidature for the county, and purchase back, at least, the old *Stamm-schloss.* But Graham obstinately refused to entertain, either proposal, continued to live as economically as before in his old apartments, and bore with an astonishing meekness of resignation the unsolicited load of fashion heaped upon his shoulders. At heart he was restless and unhappy. The mission bequeathed to him by Richard King haunted his thoughts like a spectre not to be exorcised. Was his whole life to be passed in the weary sustainment of an imposture which in itself was gall and wormwood to a nature constitutionally frank and open? Was he forever to appear a rich man and live as a poor one? Was he till his deathbed to be deemed a sordid miser, whenever he refused a just claim on his supposed wealth, and to feel his ambition excluded from the objects it earnestly coveted, and which he was forced to appear too much of an Epicurean philosopher to prize?

More torturing than all else to the man's innermost heart was the consciousness that he had not conquered, could not conquer, the yearning love with which Isaura had inspired him, and yet that against such love all his reasonings, all his prejudices, more stubbornly than ever were combined. In the French newspapers which he had glanced over while engaged in his researches in Germany—nay, in German critical journals themselves—he had seen so many notices of the young author—highly eulogistic, it is true, but which to his peculiar notions were more offensive than if they had been sufficiently condemnatory of her work to discourage her from its repetition,—notices which seemed to him the supreme impertinences which no man likes exhibited towards the woman to whom he would render the chivalrous homage of respect. Evidently this girl had become as much public property as if she

had gone on the stage. Minute details of her personal appearance—of the dimples on her cheek—of the whiteness of her arms—of her peculiar way of dressing her hair—anecdotes of her from childhood (of course invented, but how would Graham know that?)—of the reason why she had adopted the profession of author instead of that of the singer—of the sensation she had created in certain *salons* (to Graham, who knew Paris so well, *salons* in which he would not have liked his wife to appear)—of the compliments paid to her by *grands seigneurs* noted for their *liaisons* with ballet-dancers, or by authors whose genius soared far beyond the *flammantia mœnia* of a world confined by respect for one's neighbors' land-marks,—all this, which belongs to ground of personal gossip untouched by English critics of female writers—ground especially favored by Continental, and, I am grieved to say, by American journalists,—all this was to the sensitive Englishman much what the minute inventory of Egeria's charms would have been to Numa Pompilius. The nymph, hallowed to him by secret devotion, was vulgarized by the noisy hands of the mob, and by the popular voices, which said, "We know more about Egeria than you do." And when he returned to England, and met with old friends familiar to Parisian life, who said, "Of course you have read the Cicogna's *roman.* What do you think of it? Very fine writing, I daresay, but above me. I go in for 'Les Mystères de Paris' or 'Monte Christo.' But I even find Georges Sand a bore,"—then as a critic Graham Vane fired up, extolled the *roman* he would have given his ears for Isaura never to have written; but retired from the contest muttering only, "How can I—I, Graham Vane—how can I be such an idiot——how can I in every hour of the twenty-four sigh to myself, 'What are other women to me?—Isaura, Isaura!'"

THE PARISIANS.

PART II.

PREFATORY NOTE.

(BY THE AUTHOR'S SON).

"THE Parisians" and "Kenelm Chillingly" were begun about the same time, and had their common origin in the same central idea. That idea first found fantastic expression in "The Coming Race;" and the three books, taken together, constitute a special group distinctly apart from all the other works of their author.

The satire of his earlier novels is a protest against false social respectabilities; the humor of his later ones is a protest against the disrespect of social realities. By the first he sought to promote social sincerity, and the free play of personal character; by the last, to encourage mutual charity and sympathy amongst all classes on whose inter-relation depends the character of society itself. But in these three books, his latest fictions, the moral purpose is more definite and exclusive. Each of them is an expostulation against what seemed to him the perilious popularity of certain social and political theories, or a warning against the influence of certain intellectual tendencies upon individual character and national life.

This purpose, however, though common to the three fictions, is worked out in each of them by a different method. "The Coming Race" is a work of pure fancy, and the satire of it is vague and sportive. The outlines of a definite purpose are most distinctly drawn in "Chillingly"—a romance which has the source of its effect in a highly-wrought imagination. The humor and pathos of "Chillingly" are of a kind incompatible with the design of "The Parisians," which is a work of dramatized observation. "Chillingly" is a Romance; "The Parisians" is a Novel. The subject of "Chillingly" is physchological; that of "The Parisians" is social. The author's object in "Chillingly" being to illustrate the effect of "modern ideas" upon an individual character, he has confined his narrative to the biography of that one character. Hence the simplicity of plot and small number of *dramatis personæ;* whereby the work gains in height and depth what it loses in breadth of surface. "The Parisians," on the contrary, is designed to illustrate the effect of "modern ideas" upon a whole community.

This novel is therefore panoramic in the profusion and variety of figures presented by it to the reader's imagination. No exclusive prominence is vouchsafed to any of these figures. All of them are drawn and colored with an equal care, but by means of the bold broad touches necessary for their effective presentation on a canvas so large and so crowded. Such figures are, indeed, but the component features of one great Form, and their actions only so many modes of one collective impersonal character—that of the Parisian Society of Imperial and Democratic France;—a character everywhere present and busy throughout the story, of which it is the real hero or heroine. This society was doubtless selected for characteristic illustration as being the most advanced in the progress of "modern ideas." Thus, for a complete perception of its writer's fundamental purpose,

"The Parisians" should be read in connection with "Chillingly," and these two books in connection with "The Coming Race." It will then be perceived that, through the medium of alternate fancy, sentiment, and observation, assisted by humor and passion, these three books (in all other respects so different from each other) complete the presentation of the same purpose under different aspects; and thereby constitute a group of fictions which claims a separate place of its own in any thoughtful classification of their author's works.

One last word to those who will miss from these pages the connecting and completing touches of the master's hand. It may be hoped that such a disadvantage, though irreparable, is somewhat mitigated by the essential character of the work itself. The æsthetic merit of this kind of novel is in the vivacity of a general effect produced by large swift strokes of character; and in such strokes, if they be by a great artist, force and freedom of style must still be apparent, even when they are left rough and unfinished. Nor can any lack of final verbal correction much diminish the intellectual value which many of the more thoughtful passages of the present work derive from a long, keen, and practical study of political phenomena, guided by personal experience of public life, and enlightened by a large, instinctive knowledge of the human heart.

Such a belief is, at least, encouraged by the private communications spontaneously made, to him who expresses it, by persons of political experience and social position in France; who have acknowledged the general accuracy of the author's descriptions, and noticed the suggestive sagacity and penetration of his occasional comments on the circumstances and sentiments he describes.

L.

BOOK SEVENTH.

CHAPTER I.

It is the first week in the month of May, 1870. Celebrities are of rapid growth in the *salons* of Paris. Gustave Rameau has gained the position for which he sighed. The journal he edits has increased its hold on the public, and his share of the profits has been liberally augmented by the secret proprietor. Rameau is acknowledged as a power in literary circles. And as critics belonging to the same clique praise each other in Paris, whatever they may do in communities more rigidly virtuous, his poetry has been declared by authorities in the press to be superior to that of Alfred de Musset in vigor—to that of Victor Hugo in refinement; neither of which assertions would much, perhaps, shock a cultivated understanding.

It is true that it (Gustave's poetry) has not gained a wide audience among the public. But with regard to poetry nowadays, there are plenty of persons who say as Dr. Johnson said of the verse of Spratt, "I would rather praise it than read."

At all events, Rameau was courted in gay and brilliant circles, and following the general example of French *littérateurs* in fashion, lived well up to the income he received, had a delightful bachelor's apartment, furnished with artistic effect, spent largely on the adornment of his person, kept a *coupé*, and entertained profusely at the Café Anglais and the Maison Dorée. A reputation that inspired a graver and more unquiet interest had been created by the Vicomte de Mauléon. Recent articles in the "*Sens Commun*," written under the name of Pierre Firmin on the discussions on the vexed question of the *plébiscite*, had given umbrage to the Government, and Rameau had received an intimation that he, as editor, was responsible for the compositions of the contributors to the journal he edited; and that though, so long as Pierre Firmin had kept his caustic spirit within proper bounds, the Government had winked at the evasion of the law which required every political article in a journal to be signed by the real name of its author, it could do so no longer. Piere Fiemin was apparently a *nom de plume;* if not, his identity must be proved, or Rameau would pay the penalty which his contributor seemed bent on incurring.

Rameau, much alarmed for the journal that might be suspended, and for himself who might be imprisoned, conveyed this information through the publisher to his correspondent Pierre Firmin, and received the next day an article signed Victor de Mauléon, in which the writer proclaimed himself to be one and the same with Pierre Firmin, and, taking a yet bolder tone than he had before assumed, dared the Government to attempt legal measures against him. The Government was prudent enough to disregard that haughty bravado, but Victor de Mauléon rose at once into political importance. He had already in his real name and his quiet way established a popular and respectable place in Parisian society. But if this revelation created him enemies whom he had not before provoked, he was now sufficiently acquitted, by tacit consent, of the sins formerly laid to his charge, to disdain the assaults of party wrath. His old reputation for personal courage and skill in sword and pistol served, indeed, to protect him from such charges as a Parisian journalist does not reply to with his pen. If he created some enemies, he created many more friends, or at least, partisans and admirers. He only needed fine and imprisonment to become a popular hero.

A few days after he had thus proclaimed himself, Victor de Mauléon—who had before

kept aloof from Rameau, and from *salons* at which he was likely to meet that distinguished minstrel—solicited his personal acquaintance, and asked him to breakfast.

Rameau joyfully went. He had a very natural curiosity to see the contributor whose articles had so mainly insured the sale of the "*Sens Common*."

In the dark-haired, keen-eyed, well-dressed, middle-aged man, with commanding port and courtly address, he failed to recognize any resemblance to the flaxen-wigged, long-coated, be-spectacled, shambling sexagenarian whom he had known as Lebeau. Only now and then a tone of voice struck him as familiar, but he could not recollect where he had heard the voice it resembled. The thought of Lebeau did not occur to him; if it had occurred it would only have struck him as a chance coincidence. Rameau, like most egotists, was rather a dull observer of men. His genius was not objective.

"I trust, Monsieur Rameau," said the Vicomte, as he and his guest were seated at the breakfast-table, "that you are not dissatisfied with the remuneration your eminent services in the journal have received."

"The proprietor, whoever he be, has behaved most liberally," answered Rameau.

"I take that compliment to myself, *cher confrère;* for though the expenses of starting the '*Sens Commun*,' and the caution money lodged were found by a friend of mine, that was as a loan, which I have long since repaid, and the property in the journal is now exclusively mine. I have to thank you not only for your own brilliant contributions, but for those of the colleagues you secured. Monsieur Savarin's piquant criticisms were most valuable to us at starting. I regret to have lost his aid. But as he has set up a new journal of his own, even he has not wit enough to spare for another. *A propos* of our contributors, I shall ask you to present me to the fair author of 'The Artist's Daughter.' I am of too prosaic a nature to appreciate justly the merits of a *roman;* but I have heard warm praise of this story from the young—they are the best judges of that kind of literature; and I can at least understand the worth of a contributor who trebled the sale of our journal. It is a misfortune to us, indeed, that her work is completed, but I trust that the sum sent to her through our publisher suffices to tempt her to favor us with another *roman* in series."

"Mademoiselle Cicogna," said Rameau, with a somewhat sharper intonation of his sharp voice, "has accepted for the republication for her *roman* in a separate form terms which attest the worth of her genius, and has had offers from other journals for a serial tale of even higher amount than the sum so generously sent to her through your publisher."

"Has she accepted them, Monsieur Rameau? If so, *tant pis pour vous.* Pardon me, I mean that your salary suffers in proportion as the '*Sens Commun*' declines in sale."

"She has not accepted them. I advised her not to do so until she could compare them with those offered by the proprietor of the '*Sens Commun.*'"

"And your advice guides her? Ah, *cher confrère*, you are a happy man!—you have influence over this young aspirant to the fame of a De Stael or a Georges Sand."

"I flatter myself that I have some," answered Rameau, smiling loftily as he helped himself to another tumbler of Volnay wine—excellent, but rather heady.

"So much the better. I leave you free to arrange terms with Mademoiselle Cicogna, higher than she can obtain elsewhere, and kindly contrive my own personal introduction to her—you have breakfasted already?—permit me to offer you a cigar—excuse me if I do not bear you company; I seldom smoke—never of a morning. Now to business, and the state of France. Take that easy-chair, seat yourself comfortably. So! Listen! If ever Mephistopheles revisit the earth, how he will laugh at Universal Suffrage and Vote by Ballot in an old country like France, as things to be admired by educated men, and adopted by friends of genuine freedom!"

"I don't understand you," said Rameau.

"In this respect at least, let me hope that I can furnish you with understanding."

"The Emperor has resorted to a *plébiscite*—viz., a vote by ballot and universal suffrage—as to certain popular changes which circumstances compel him to substitute for his former personal rule. Is there a single intelligent Liberal who is not against that *plébiscite?*—is there any such who does not know that the appeal of the Emperor to universal suffrage and vote by ballot must result in a triumph over all

the variations of free thought, by the unity which belongs to Order, represented through an able man at the head of the State? The multitude never comprehend principles; principles are complex ideas; they comprehend a simple idea, and the simplest idea is a Name that rids their action of all responsibility to thought.

"Well, in France there are principles superabundant which you can pit against the principle of Imperial rule. But there is not one name you can pit against Napoleon the Third; therefore, I steer our little bark in the teeth of the popular gale when I denounce the *plébiscite*, and '*Le Sens Commun*' will necessarily fall in sale—it is beginning to fall already. We shall have the educated men with us, the rest against. In every country—even in China, where all are highly educated—a few must be yet more highly educated than the many. Monsieur Rameau, I desire to overthrow the Empire: in order to do that, it is not enough to have on my side the educated men, I must have the *canaille*—the *canaille* of Paris and of the manufacturing towns. But I use the *canaille* for my purpose—I don't mean to enthrone it. You comprehend?—the *canaille* quiescent is simply mud at the bottom of a stream; the *canaille* agitated, is mud at the surface. But no man capable of three ideas builds the palaces and senates of civilized society out of mud, be it at the top or the bottom of an ocean. Can either you or I desire that the destinies of France shall be swayed by coxcombical artisans who think themselves superior to every man who writes grammar, and whose idea of a commonwealth is the confiscation of private property?"

Rameau, thoroughly puzzled by this discourse, bowed his head, and replied whisperingly, "Proceed. You are against the Empire, yet against the populace!—What are you for? not, surely, the Legitimists?—are you Republican? Orleanist? or what?"

"Your questions are very pertinent," answered the Vicomte, courteously, "and my answer shall be very frank. I am against absolute rule, whether under a Bonaparte or a Bourbon. I am for a free State whether under a constitutional hereditary sovereign like the English or Belgian; or whether, republican in name, it be less democratic than constitutional monarchy in practice, like the American. But as a man interested in the fate of '*Le Sens Commun*,' I hold in profound disdain all crotchets for revolutionizing the elements of Human Nature. Enough of this abstract talk. To the point. You are of course aware of the violent meetings held by the Socialists, nominally against the *plébiscite*, really against the Emperor himself?"

"Yes, I know at least that the working class are extremely discontented; the numerous strikes last month were not on a mere question of wages—they were against the existing forms of society. And the articles by Pierre Firmin which brought me into collision with the Government, seemed to differ from what you now say. They approve those strikes; they appeared to sympathize with the revolutionary meetings at Belleville and Montmartre."

"Of course—we use coarse tools for destroying; we cast them aside for finer ones when we want to reconstruct.

"I attended one of those meetings last night. See, I have a pass for all such assemblies, signed by some dolt who cannot even spell the name he assumes—'*Pon-de-Tair*.' A commissary of police sat yawning at the end of the orchestra, his secretary by his side, while the orators stammer out fragments of would-be thunderbolts. Commissary of police yawns more wearily than before, secretary disdains to use his pen, seizes his penknife and pares his nails. Up rises a wild-haired, weaked-limbed *silhouette* of a man, and affecting a solemnity of mien which might have become the virtuous Guizot, moves this resolution—'The French people condemns Charles Louis Napoleon the Third to the penalty of perpetual hard labor.' Then up rises the commissary of police, and says quietly, 'I declare this meeting at an end.'

"Sensation among the audience—they gesticulate—they screech—they bellow—the commissary puts on his great-coat—the secretary gives a last touch to his nails and pockets his pen-knife—the audience disperses—the *silhouette* of a man effaces itself—all is over."

"You describe the scene most wittily," said Rameau, laughing, but the laugh was constrained. A would-be cynic himself, there was a something grave and earnest in the real cynic that awed him.

"What conclusion do you draw from such a

scene, *cher poète?*" asked De Mauléon, fixing his keen quiet eyes on Rameau.

"What conclusion? Well, that—that——"

"Yes, continue."

"That the audience were sadly degenerated from the time when Mirabeau said to a Master of the Ceremonies, 'We are here by the power of the French people, and nothing but the point of the bayonet shall expel us.'"

"Spoken like a poet, a French poet. I suppose you admire M. Victor Hugo. Conceding that he would have employed a more sounding phraseology, comprising more absolute ignorance of men, times, and manners in unintelligible metaphor and melo-dramatic braggadoccio, your answer might have been his; but pardon me if I add, it would not be that of *Common Sense.*"

"Monsieur le Vicomte might rebuke me more politely," said Rameau, coloring high.

"Accept my apologies; I did not mean to rebuke, but to instruct. The times are not those of 1789. And Nature, ever repeating herself in the production of coxcombs and blockheads, never repeats herself in the production of Mirabeaus. The Empire is doomed—doomed, because it is hostile to the free play of intellect. Any Government that gives absolute preponderance to the many is hostile to intellect, for intellect is necessarily confined to the few.

"Intellect is the most revengeful of all the elements of society. It cares not what the materials through which it insinuates or forces its way to its seat.

"I accept the aid of *Pom-de-Tair.* I do not demean myself to the extent of writing articles that may favor the principles of *Pom-de-Tair*, signed in the name of Victor de Mauléon or of Pierre Firmin.

"I will beg you, my dear editor, to obtain clever, smart writers, who know nothing about Socialists acd Internationalists, who therefore will not commit *Le Sens Commun* by advocating the doctrines of those idiots, but who will flatter the vanity of the *canaille*—vaguely; write any stuff they please about the renown of Paris, 'the eye of the world,' 'the sun of the European system,' etc., of the artisans of Paris as supplying soul to that eye and fuel to that sun—any *blague* of that sort—*genre Victor Hugo;* but nothing definite against life and property, nothing that may not be considered hereafter as the harmless extravagance of a poetic enthusiasm. You might write such articles yourself. In fine, I want to excite the multitude, and yet not to commit our journal to the contempt of the few.

"Nothing is to be admitted that may bring the law upon us except it be signed by my name. There may be a moment in which it would be desirable for somebody to be sent to prison: in that case, I allow no substitute—I go myself.

"Now you have my most secret thoughts. I entrust them to your judgment with entire confidence. Monsieur Lebeau gave you a high character, which you have hitherto deserved. By the way, have you seen anything lately of that *bourgeois* conspirator?"

"No, his professed business of letter-writer or agent is transferred to a clerk, who says M. Lebeau is abroad."

"Ah! I don't think that is true. I fancy I saw him the other evening gliding along the lanes of Belleville. He is too confirmed a conspirator to be long out of Paris; no place like Paris for seething brains."

"Have you known M. Lebeau long?" asked Rameau.

"Ay, many years. We are both Norman by birth, as you may perceive by something broad in our accent."

"Ha! I knew your voice was familiar to me; certainly it does remind me of Lebeau's."

"Normans are like each other in many things besides voice and accent—obstinacy, for instance, in clinging to ideas once formed; this makes them good friends and steadfast enemies. I would advise no man to make an enemy of Lebeau.

"*Au revoir, cher confrère.* Do not forget to present me to Mademoiselle Cicogan."

CHAPTER II.

On Leaving De Mauléon and regaining his *coupé*, Rameau felt at once bewildered and humbled, for he was not prepared for the tone of careless superiority which the Vicomte assumed over him. He had expected to be much complimented, and he comprehended vaguely that he had been somewhat snubbed. He was not only irritated—he was bewild-

ered, for De Mauléon's political disquisitions did not leave any clear or definite idea on his mind as to the principles which as editor of the *Sens Commun* he was to see adequately represented and carried out. In truth, Rameau was one of those numerous Parisian politicians who have read little and reflected less on the government of men and States. Envy is said by a great French writer to be the vice of Democracies. Envy certainly had made Rameau a democrat. He could talk and write glibly enough upon the themes of equality and fraternity, and was so far an ultra-democrat that he thought moderation the sign of a mediocre understanding.

De Mauléon's talk, therefore, terribly perplexed him. It was unlike anything he had heard before. Its revolutionary professions, accompanied with so much scorn for the multitude, and the things the multitude desired, were Greek to him. He was not shocked by the cynicism which placed wisdom in using the passions of mankind as tools for the interests of an individual; but he did not understand the frankness of its avowal.

Nevertheless the man had dominated over and subdued him. He recognized the power of his contributor without clearly analyzing its nature—a power made up of large experience of life, of cold examination of doctrines that heated others—of patrician calm—of intellectual sneer—of collected confidence in self.

Besides, Rameau felt, with a nervous misgiving, that in this man, who so boldly proclaimed his contempt for the instruments he used, he had found a master, De Mauléon, then, was sole proprietor of the journal from which Rameau drew his resources; might at any time dismiss him; might at any time involve the journal in penalties which, even if Rameau could escape in his official capacity as editor, still might stop the "*Sens Commun*," and with it Rameau's luxurious subsistence.

Altogether the visit to De Mauléon had been anything but a pleasant one. He sought, as the carriage rolled on, to turn his thoughts to more agreeable subjects, and the image of Isaura rose before him. To do him justice he had learned to love this girl as well as his nature would permit: he loved her with the whole strength of his imagination, and though his heart was somewhat cold, his imagination was very ardent. He loved her also with the whole strength of his vanity, and vanity was even a more preponderent organ of his system than imagination. To carry off as his prize one who had already achieved celebrity, whose beauty and fascination of manner were yet more acknowledged than her genius, would certainly be a glorious triumph.

Every Parisian of Rameau's stamp looks forward in marriage to a brilliant *salon*. What *salon* more brilliant than that which he and Isaura united could command? He had long conquered his early impulse of envy at Isaura's success,—in fact that success had become associated with his own, and had contributed greatly to his enrichment. So that to other motives of love he might add the prudential one of interest. Rameau well knew that his own vein of composition, however lauded by the cliques, and however unrivalled in his own eyes, was not one that brings much profit in the market. He compared himself to those poets who are too far in advance of their time to be quite as sure of bread and cheese as they are of immortal fame.

But he regarded Isaura's genius as of a lower order, and a thing in itself very marketable. Marry her, and the bread and cheese was so certain that he might elaborate as slowly as he pleased the verses destined to immortal fame. Then he should be independent of inferior creatures like Victor de Mauléon. But while Rameau convinced himself that he was passionately in love with Isaura, he could not satisfy himself that she was in love with him.

Though during the past year they had seen each other constantly, and their literary occupations had produced many sympathies between them—though he had intimated that many of his most eloquent love-poems were inspired by her—though he had asserted in prose, very pretty prose too, that she was all that youthful poets dream of,—yet she had hitherto treated such declarations with a playful laugh, accepting them as elegant compliments inspired by Parisian gallantry; and he felt an angry and sore foreboding that if he were to insist too seriously on the earnestness of their import, and ask her plainly to be his wife, her refusal would be certain, and his visits to her house might be interdicted.

Still Isaura was unmarried, still she had re-

fused offers of marriage from men higher placed than himself,—still he divined no one whom she could prefer. And as he now leaned back in his *coupé* he muttered to himself, "Oh, if I could but get rid of that little demon Julie, I would devote myself so completely to winning Isaura's heart that I must succeed! But how to get rid of Julie? She so adores me, and is so headstrong! She is capable of going to Isaura—showing my letters—making such a scene!"

Here he checked the carriage at a *café* on the Boulevard — descended, imbibed two glasses of absinthe,—and then feeling much emboldened, remounted his *coupé* and directed the driver to Isaura's apartment.

CHAPTER III.

Yes, celebrities are of rapid growth in the *salons* of Paris. Far more solid than that of Rameau, far more brilliant that than of De Mauléon, was the celebrity which Isaura had now acquired. She had been unable to retain the pretty suburban villa at A——. The owner wanted to alter and enlarge it for his own residence, and she had been persuaded by Signorina Venosta, who was always sighing for fresh *salons* to conquer, to remove (towards the close of the previous year) to apartments in the centre of the Parisian *beau monde*. Without formally professing to receive, on one evening in the week her *salon* was open to those who had eagerly sought her acquaintance—comprising many stars in the world of fashion, as well as those in the world of art and letters. And as she had now wholly abandoned the idea of the profession for which her voice had been cultivated, she no longer shrank from the exercise of her surpassing gift of song for the delight of private friends. Her physician had withdrawn the interdict on such exercise.

His skill, aided by the rich vitality of her constitution, had triumphed over all tendencies to the malady for which he had been consulted. To hear Isaura Cicogna sing in her own house was a privilege sought and prized by many who never read a word of her literary compositions. A good critic of a book is rare; but good judges of a voice are numberless. Adding this attraction of song to her youth, her beauty, her frank powers of converse—an innocent sweetness of manner free from all conventional affectation—and to the fresh novelty of a genius which inspired the young with enthusiasm and beguiled the old to indulgence, it was no wonder that Isaura became a celebrity at Paris.

Perhaps it was a wonder that her head was not turned by the adulation that surrounded her. But I believe, be it said with diffidence, that a woman of mind so superior that the mind never pretends to efface the heart, is less intoxicated with flattery than a man equally exposed to it.

It is the strength of her heart that keeps her head sober. Isaura had never yet overcome her first romance of love; as yet, amid all her triumphs, there was not a day in which her thoughts did not wistfully, mournfully, fly back to those blessed moments in which she felt her cheek color before a look, her heart beat at the sound of a footfall. Perhaps if there had been the customary finis to this young romance—the lover's deliberate denunciation, his formal farewell—the girl's pride would ere this have conquered her affection,—possibly—who knows?—replaced it.

But, reader, be you male or female, have you ever known this sore trial of affection and pride, that from some cause or other, to you mysterious, the dear intercourse to which you had accustomed the secret life of your life, abruptly ceases; you know that a something has come between you and the beloved which you cannot distinguish, cannot measure, cannot guess, and therefore cannot surmount; and you say to yourself at the dead of solitary night, "Oh for an explanation! Oh for one meeting more! All might be so easily set right; or, if not, I should know the worst, and knowing it, could conquer!"

This trial was Isaura's. There had been no explanation, no last farewell between her and Graham. She divined — no woman lightly makes a mistake there—that he loved her. She knew that this dread something had intervened between her and him when he took leave of her before others so many months ago; that this dread something still continued —what was it? She was certain that it would vanish, could they but once meet again, and not before others. Oh, for such a meeting!

She could not herself destroy hope. She

could not marry another. She would have no heart to give to another while *he* was free, while in doubt if his heart was still her own. And thus her pride did not help her to conquer her affection.

Of Graham Vane she heard occasionally. He had ceased to correspond with Savarin; but among those who most frequented her *salon* were the Morleys. Americans so well educated and so well placed as the Morleys knew something about every Englishman of the social station of Graham Vane. Isaura learned from them that Graham, after a tour on the Continent, had returned to England at the commencement of the year, had been invited to stand for Parliament, had refused, that his name was in the list published by the *Morning Post* of the *élite* whose arrivals in London, or whose presence at dinner-tables, is recorded as an event. That the *Athenæum* had mentioned a rumor that Graham Vane was the author of a political pamphlet which, published anonymously, had made no inconsiderable sensation. Isaura sent to England for that pamphlet: the subject was somewhat dry, and the style, though clear and vigorous, was scarcely of the eloquence which wins the admiration of women; and yet she learned every word of it by heart.

We know how little she dreamed that the celebrity which she hailed as an approach to him was daily making her more remote. The sweet labors she undertook for that celebrity, continued to be sweetened yet more by secret association with the absent one. How mnay of the passages most admired could never have been written had he been never known!

And she blessed those labors the more that they upheld her from the absolute feebleness of sickened reverie, beguiled her from the gnawing torture of unsatisfied conjecture. She did comply with Madame de Grantmesnil's command—did pass from the dusty *beaten* road of life into green fields and along flowery river banks, and enjoy that ideal by-world.

But still the one image which reigned over her human heart moved beside her in the gardens of fairyland.

CHAPTER IV.

ISAURA was seated in her pretty *salon*, with the Venosta, M. Savarin, the Morleys, and the financier Louvier, when Rameau was announced.

"Ha!" cried Savarin, "we were just discussing a matter which nearly concerns you, *cher poète*. I have not seen you since the announcement that Pierre Firmin is no other than Victor de Mauléon. *Ma foi*, that worthy seems likely to be as dangerous with his pen as he was once with his sword. The article in which he revealed himself makes a sharp lunge on the Government.

"Take care of yourself. When hawks and nightingales fly together, the hawk may escape, and the nightingale complain of the barbarity of kings, in a cage: 'flebiliter gemens infelix avis.'"

"He is not fit to conduct a journal," replied Rameau, magniloquently, "who will not brave a danger for his body in defence of the right to infinity for his thought."

"Bravo!" said Mrs. Morley, clapping her pretty hands. "That speech reminds me of home. The French are very much like the Americans in their style of oratory."

"So," said Louvier, "my old friend the Vicomte has come out as a writer, a politician, a philosopher; I feel hurt that he kept this secret from me despite our intimacy. I suppose you knew it from the first, M. Rameau?"

"No, I was as much taken by surprise as the rest of the world. You have long known M. de Mauléon?"

"Yes, I may say we began life together—that is, much the same time."

"What is he like in appearance?" asked Mrs. Morley.

"The ladies thought him very handsome when he was young," replied Louvier. "He is still a fine looking man, about my height."

"I should like to know him!" cried Mrs. Morley, "if only to tease that husband of mine. He refuses me the dearest of woman's rights—I can't make him jealous."

"You may have the opportunity of knowing this *ci-devant* Lovelace very soon," said Rameau, "for he has begged me to present him to Mademoiselle Cicogan, and I will ask her permission to do so on Thursday evening, when she receives."

Isaura who had hitherto attended very listlessly to the conversation, bowed assent. "Any friend of yours will be welcome. But I own the articles signed in the name of Pierre Firmin do not prepossess me in favor of their author."

"Why so?" asked Louvier; "surely you are not an Imperialist?"

"Nay, I do not pretend to be a politician at all, but there is something in the writing of Pierre Firmin that pains and chills me."

"Yet the secret of its popularity," said Savarin, "is that it says what every one says—only better."

"I see now that it is exactly that which displeases me; it is the Paris talk condensed into epigram: the graver it is the less it elevates—the lighter it is, the more it saddens."

"That is meant to hit me," said Savarin, with his sunny laugh—"me whom you call cynical."

"No, dear M. Savarin; for above all your cynicism is genuine gaiety, and below it solid kindness. You have that which I do not find in M. de Mauléon's writing, nor often in the talk of the *salons*—you have youthfulness."

"Youthfulness at sixty—flatterer!"

"Genius does not count its years by the almanac," said Mrs. Morley. "I know what Isaura means—she is quite right; there is a breath of winter in M. de Mauléon's style, and an odor of fallen leaves. Not that his diction wants vigor; on the contrary, it is crisp with hoar-frost. But the sentiments conveyed by the diction are those of a nature sear and withered. And it is in this combination of brisk words and decayed feelings that his writing represents the talk and mind of Paris. He and Paris are always fault-finding: fault-finding is the attribute of old age."

Colonel Morley looked round with pride, as much as to say—"clever talker, my wife."

Savarin understood that look, and replied to it courteously. "Madame has a gift of expression which Emile de Girardin can scarcely surpass. But when she blames us for fault-finding, can she expect the friends of liberty to praise the present style of things?"

"I should be obliged to the friends of liberty," said the colonel, drily, "to tell me how that state of things is to be mended. I find no enthusiasm for the Orleanists, none for a Republic; people sneer at religion; no belief in a cause; no adherence to an opinion. But the worst of it is that, like all people who are *blasés*, the Parisians are eager for strange excitement, and ready to listen to any oracle who promises a relief from indifferentism. This it is which makes the Press more dangerous in France than it is in any other country. Elsewhere the Press sometimes leads, sometimes follows, public opinion. Here there is no public opinion to consult; and instead of opinion the Press represents passion."

"My dear colonel Morley," said Savarin, "I hear you very often say that a Frenchman cannot understand America. Permit me to observe that an American cannot understand France—or at least Paris. *A propos* of Paris—that is a large speculation of yours, Louvier, in the new suburb."

"And a very sound one; I advise you to invest in it. I can secure you at present 5 per cent. on the rental; that is nothing—the houses will be worth double when the Rue de Louvier is completed."

"Alas! I have no money; my new journal absorbs all my capital."

"Shall I transfer the moneys I hold for you, Signorina, and add to them whatever you may have made by your delightful *roman*, as yet lying idle, to this investment? I cannot say more in its favor, than this—I have embarked a very large portion of my capital in the Rue de Louvier, and I flatter myself that I am not one of those men who persuade their friends to do a foolish thing by setting them the example."

"Whatever you advise on such a subject," said Isaura, graciously, "is sure to be as wise as it is kind!"

"You consent, then?"

"Certainly."

Here the Venosta, who had been listening with great attention to Louvier's commendation of this investment, drew him aside, and whispered in his ear—"I suppose M. Louvier. that one can't put a little money—a very little money—*poco-poco-pocolino*, into your street"

"Into my street! Ah, I understand—into the speculation of the Rue de Louvier! Certainly you can. Arrangements are made on purpose to suit the convenience of the smallest capitalists,—from 500 francs upwards."

"And you feel quite sure that we shall double our money when the street is com-

pleted—I should not like to have my brains in my heels." *

"More than double it, I hope, long before the street is completed."

"I have saved a little money—very little. I have no relations, and I mean to leave it all to the Signorina; and if it could be doubled, why, there would be twice as much to leave her."

"So there would," said Louvier. "You can't do better than put it all into the Rue de Louvier. I will send you the necessary papers to-morrow when I send hers to the Signorina."

Louvier here turned to address himself to Colonel Morley, but finding that degenerate son of America indisposed to get cent. per cent. for his money when offered by a Parisian, he very soon took his leave. The other visitors followed his example except Rameau, who was left alone with the Venosta and Isaura. The former had no liking for Rameau, who showed her none of the attentions her innocent vanity demanded, and she soon took herself off to her own room to calculate the amount of her savings, and dream of the Rue de Louvier and "golden joys."

Rameau approaching his chair to Isaura's then commenced conversation, drily enough, upon pecuniary matters; acquitting himself of the mission with which De Mauléon had charged him, the request for a new work from her pen the "*Sens Commun*," and the terms that ought to be asked for compliance. The young lady-author shrank from this talk. Her private income though modest, sufficed for her wants, and she felt a sensitive shame in the sale of her thoughts and fancies.

Putting hurriedly aside the mercantile aspect of the question, she said that she had no other work in her mind at present—that, whatever her vein of invention might be, it flowed at its own will, and could not be commanded.

"Nay," said Rameau, "this is not true. We fancy, in our hours of indolence, that we must wait for inspiration; but once force ourselves to work, and ideas spring forth at the wave of the pen. You may believe me here—I speak from experience: I, compelled to work, and in modes not to my taste—I do my task I know not how. I rub the lamp, 'the genius comes.'"

"I have read in some English author that motive power is necessary to continued labor: you have motive power, I have none."

"I do not quite understand you."

"I mean that a strong ruling motive is required to persist in any regular course of action that needs effort: the motive with the majority of men is the need of subsistence; with a large number (as in trades or professions), not actually want, but a desire of gain, and perhaps of distinction in their calling: the desire of professional distinction expands into the longings for more comprehensive fame, more exalted honors, with the few who become great writers, soldiers, statesmen, orators."

"And do you mean to say you have no such motive?"

"None in the sting of want, none in the desire of gain."

"But fame?"

"Alas! I thought so once. I know not now—I began to doubt if fame should be sought by women." This was said very dejectedly.

"Tut, dearest Signorina! what gadfly has stung you? Your doubt is a weakness unworthy of your intellect; and even were it not, genius is destiny and will be obeyed: you *must* write, despite yourself—and your writing *must* bring fame, whether you wish it or not."

Isaura was silent, her head dropped on her breast—there were tears in her downcast eyes.

Rameau took her hand, which she yielded to him passively, and clasping it in both his own, he rushed on impulsively.

"Oh, I know what these misgivings are when we feel ourselves solitary, unloved: how often have they been mine! But how different would labor be if shared and sympathized with by a congenial mind, by a heart that beats in unison with one's own!"

Isaura's breast heaved beneath her robe, she sighed softly.

"And then how sweet the fame of which the one we love is proud! how trifling becomes the pang of some malignant depreciation, which a word from the beloved one can soothe! O Signorina! O Isaura! are we not made for each other? Kindred pursuits, hopes and fears in common; the same race to run, the same goal to win! I need a motive, stronger than I have yet known for the persevering energy that insures success: supply to me that motive.

* "Avere il cervello nella calcagna"—viz., to act without prudent reflection.

Let me think that whatever I win in the strife of the world is a tribute to Isaura. No, do not seek to withdraw this hand, let me claim it as mine for life. I love you as man never loved before—do not reject my love."

They say the woman who hesitates is lost. Isaura hesitated, but was not yet lost. The words she listened to moved her deeply. Offers of marriage she had already received: one from a rich middle-aged noble, a devoted musical virtuoso; one from a young *avocat* fresh from the provinces, and somewhat calculating on her *dot;* one from a timid but enthusiastic admirer of her genius and her beauty, himself rich, handsome, of good birth, but with shy manners and faltering tongue.

But these had made their proposals with the formal respect habitual to French decorum in matrimonial proposals. Words so eloquently impassioned as Gustave Rameau's had never before thrilled her ears. Yes, she was deeply moved; and yet, by that very emotion she knew that it was not to the love of this wooer that her heart responded.

There is a circumstance in the history of courtship familiar to the experience of many women, that while the suitor is pleading his cause, his language may touch every fibre in the heart of his listener, yet substitute, as it were, another presence for his own. She may be saying to herself, "Oh that another had said those words!" and be dreaming of the other, while she hears the one.

Thus it was now with Isaura, and not till Rameau's voice had ceased did that dream pass away, and with a slight shiver she turned her face towards the wooer, sadly and pityingly.

"It cannot be," she said, in a low whisper; "I were not worthy of your love could I accept. Forget that you have so spoken; let me still be a friend admiring your genius, interested in your career. I cannot be more. Forgive me if I unconsciously led you to think I could, I am so grieved to pain you."

"Am I to understand," said Rameau, coldly, for his *amour propre* was resentful, "that the proposals of another have been more fortunate than mine?" And he named the youngest and comeliest of those whom she had rejected.

"Certainly not," said Isaura.

Rameau rose and went to the window, turning his face from her. In reality he was striving to collect his thoughts and decide on the course it were most prudent for him now to pursue. The fumes of the absinthe which had, despite his previous foreboddings, emboldened him to hazard his avowal, had now subsided into the languid reaction which is generally consequent on that treacherous stimulus, a reaction not unfavorable to passionless reflection. He knew that if he said he could not conquer his love, he would still cling to hope, and trust to perseverance and time, he should compel Isaura to forbid his visits, and break off their familiar intercourse. This would be fatal to the chance of yet winning her, and would also be of serious disadvantage to his more worldly interests. Her literary aid might become essential to the journal on which his fortunes depended; and at all events, in her conversation, in her encouragement, in her sympathy with the pains and joys of his career, he felt a support, a comfort, nay, an inspiration. For the spontaneous gush of her fresh thoughts and fancies served to recruit his own jaded ideas, and enlarge his own stinted range of invention. No, he could not commit himself to the risk of banishment from Isaura.

And mingled with meaner motives for discretion, there was one of which he was but vaguely conscious, purer and nobler. In the society of this girl, in whom whatever was strong and high in mental organization became so sweetened into feminine grace by gentleness of temper and kindliness of disposition, Rameau felt himself a better man. The virgin-like dignity with which she moved, so untainted by a breath of scandal, amid *salons* in which the envy of virtues doubted sought to bring innocence itself into doubt, warmed into a genuine reverence the cynicism of his professed creed.

While with her, while under her her chastening influence, he was sensible of a poetry infused within him far more true to the Camœnæ than all he had elaborated into verse. In these moments he was ashamed of the vices he had courted as distractions. He imagined that, with her all his own, it would be easy to reform.

No; to withdraw wholly from Isaura was to renounce his sole chance of redemption.

While these thoughts, which it takes so long to detail, passed rapidly through his brain, he felt a soft touch on his arm, and, turning

his face slowly, encountered the tender, compassionate eyes of Isaura.

"Be consoled, dear friend," she said, with a smile, half cheering, half mournful. "Perhaps for all true artists the solitary lot is the best."

"I will try to think so," answered Rameau; "and meanwhile I thank you with a full heart for the sweetness with which you have checked my presumption—the presumption shall not be repeated. Gratefully I accept the friendship you deign to tender me. You bid me forget the words I uttered. Promise in turn that *you* will forget them—or at least consider them withdrawn. You will receive me still as a friend?"

"As friend, surely; yes. Do we not both need friends?" She held out her hand as she spoke; he bent over it, kissed it with respect, and the interview thus closed.

CHAPTER V.

It was late in the evening of that day when a man who had the appearance of a decent *bourgeois*, in the lower grades of that comprehensive class, entered one of the streets in the Faubourg Montmartre, tenanted chiefly by artisans. He paused at the open doorway of a tall narrow house, and drew back as he heard footsteps descending a very gloomy staircase.

The light from a gas lamp on the street fell full on the face of the person thus quitting the house—the face of a young and handsome man, dressed with the quiet elegance which betokened one of higher rank or fashion than that neighborhood was habituated to find among its visitors. The first comer retreated promptly into the shade, and, as by sudden impulse, drew his hat low down over his eyes.

The other man did not, however, observe him, went his way with quick step along the street, and entered another house some yards distant.

"What can that pious Bourbonite do here?" muttered the first comer. "Can he be a conspirator? *Diable!* 'tis as dark as Erebus on that staircase."

Taking cautious hold of the banister, the man now ascended the stairs. On the landing of the first floor there was a gas lamp which threw upward a faint ray that finally died at the third story. But at that third story the man's journey ended; he pulled a bell at the door to the right, and in another moment or so the door was opened by a young woman of twenty-eight or thirty, dressed very simply, but with a certain neatness not often seen in the wives of artisans in the Faubourg Montmartre. Her face, which, though pale and delicate, retained much of the beauty of youth, became clouded as she recognized the visitor; evidently the visit was not welcome to her.

"Monsieur Lebeau again!" she exclaimed, shrinking back.

"At your service, *chère dame*. The goodman is of course at home? Ah, I catch sight of him," and sliding by the woman, M. Lebeau passed the narrow lobby in which she stood, through the open door conducting into the room in which Armand Monnier was seated, his chin propped on his hand, his elbow resting on a table, looking abstractedly into space. In a corner of the room two small children were playing languidly with a set of bone tablets, inscribed with the letters of the alphabet. But whatever the children were doing with the alphabet, they were certainly not learning to read from it.

The room was of fair size and height, and by no meams barely or shabbily furnished. There was a pretty clock on the mantelpiece. On the wall were hung designs for the decoration of apartments, and shelves on which were ranged a few books.

The window was open, and on the sill were placed flower-pots; you could scent the odor they wafted into the room.

Altogether it was an apartment suited to a skilled artisan earning high wages. From the room we are now in, branched on one side a small but commodious kitchen; on the other side, on which the door was screened by a *portière*, with a border prettily worked by female hands—some years ago, for it was faded now—was a bed-room, communicating with one of less size in which the children slept. We do not enter those additional rooms, but it may be well here to mention them as indications of the comfortable state of an intelligent skilled artisan of Paris, who thinks he can better that state by some revolution which may ruin his employer.

Monnier started up at the entrance of Lebeau, and his face showed that he did not share the dislike to the visit which that of the female partner of his life had evinced. On the contrary, his smile was cordial, and there was a hearty ring in the voice which cried out—

"I am glad to see you—something to do? Eh?"

"Always ready to work for liberty, *mon brave*."

"I hope so; what's in the wind now?"

"O Armand, be prudent—be prudent!" cried the woman, piteously. "Do not lead him into further mischief, Monsieur Lebeau:" as she faltered forth the last words, she bowed her head over the two little ones, and her voice died in sobs.

"Monnier," said Lebeau, gravely, "Madame is right. I ought not to lead you into further mischief; there are three in the room who have better claims on you than——"

"The cause of the millions," interrupted Monnier.

"No."

He approached the woman and took up one of the children very tenderly, stroking back its curls and kissing the face, which, if before surprised and saddened by the mother's sob, now smiled gaily under the father's kiss.

"Canst thou doubt, my Héloise," said the artisan mildly, "that whatever I do thou and these are not uppermost in my thoughts? I act for thine interest and theirs—the world as it exists in the foe of you three. The world I would replace it by will be more friendly."

The poor woman made no reply, but as he drew her towards him, she leant her head upon his breast and wept quietly. Monnier led her thus from the room whispering words of soothing. The children followed the parents into the adjoining chamber. In a few minutes Monnier returned, shutting the door behind him, and drawing the *portière* close.

"You will excuse me, Citizen, and my poor wife—wife she is to me and to all who visit here, though the law says she is not."

"I respect Madame the more for her dislike to myself," said Lebeau, with a somewhat melancholy smile.

"Not dislike to you personally, Citizen, but dislike to the business which she connects with your visits, and she is more than usually agitated on that subject this evening, because, just before you came, another visitor had produced a great effect on her feelings—poor dear Héloise.

"Indeed! how?"

"Well, I was employed in the winter in redecorating the *salon* and *boudoir* of Madame de Vandemar; her son, M. Raoul, took great interest in superintending the details. He would sometimes talk to me very civilly, not only on my work, but on other matters. It seems that Madame now wants something done to the *salle-à-manger*, and asked old Gérard—my late master, you know—to send me. Of course he said that was impossible—for, though I was satisfied with my own wages, I had induced his other men to strike, and was one of the ringleaders in the recent strike of artisans in general—a dangerous man, and he would have nothing more to do with me. So M. Raoul came to see and talk with me—scarce gone before you rang at the bell—you might almost have met him on the stairs."

"I saw a *beau monsieur* come out of the house. And so his talk has affected Madame."

"Very much; it was quite brother-like. He is one of the religious set, and they always get at the weak side of soft sex."

"Ay," said Lebeau, thoughtfully; "if religion were banished from the laws of men, it would still find a refuge in the hearts of women. But Raoul de Vandemar did not presume to preach to Madame upon the sin of loving you and your children?"

"I should like to have heard him preach to her," cried Monnier, fiercely. "No, he only tried to reason with me about matters he could not understand."

"Strikes?"

"Well, not exactly strikes—he did not contend that we workmen had not full right to combine and to strike for obtaining fairer money's worth for our work; but he tried to persuade me that where, as in my case, it was not a matter of wages, but of political principle—of war against capitalists—I could but injure myself and mislead others. He wanted to reconcile me to old Gérard, or to let him find me employment elsewhere; and when I told him that my honor forbade me to make terms for myself till those with whom I was joined were satisfied, he said, 'But if this lasts much longer, your children will not look so rosy;' then poor Héloise be-

gan to wring her hands and cry, and he took me aside and wanted to press money on me as a loan. He spoke so kindly that I could not be angry; but when he found I would take nothing, he asked me about some families in the street of whom he had a list, and who, he was informed, were in great distress. That is true; I am feeding some of them myself out of my savings. You see, this young Monsieur belongs to a society of men, many as young as he is, which visits the poor and dispenses charity. I did not feel I had a right to refuse aid for others, and I told him where his money would be best spent. I suppose he went there when he left me."

"I know the society you mean, that of St. François de Sâles. It comprises some of the most ancient of that old *noblesse* to which the *ouvriers* in the great Revolution were so remorseless."

"We *ouvriers* are wiser now; we see that in assailing *them*, we gave ourselves worse tyrants in the new aristocracy of the capitalists. Our quarrel now is that of artisans against employers."

"Of course, I am aware of that; but to leave general politics, tell me frankly, How has the strike affected you as yet? I mean in purse. Can you stand its pressure? If not, you are above the false pride of not taking help from me, a fellow-conspirator, though you were justified in refusing it when offered by Raoul de Vandemar, the servant of the Church."

"Pardon, I refuse aid from any one, except for the common cause. But do not fear for me, I am not pinched as yet. I have had high wages for some years, and since I and Héloise came together, I have not wasted a *sou* out of doors, except in the way of public duty, such as making converts at the *Jean Jacques* and elsewhere; a glass of beer and a pipe don't cost much. And Héloise is such a housewife, so thrifty, scolds me if I buy her a ribbon, poor love! No wonder that I would pull down a society that dares to scroff at her—dares to say she is not my wife, and her children are base born. No, I have some savings left yet. War to society, war to the knife!"

"Monnier," said Lebeau, in a voice that evinced emotion, "listen to me: I have received injuries from society which, when they were fresh, half-maddened me—that is twenty years ago. I would then have thrown myself into any plot against society that proffered revenge; but society, my friend, is a wall of very strong masonry, as it now stands; it may be sapped in the course of a thousand years, but stormed in a day—no. You dash your head against it—you scatter your brains, and you dislodge a stone. Society smiles in scorn, effaces the stain, and replaces the stone. I no longer war against society. I do war against a system in that society which is hostile to me—systems in France are easily overthrown. I say this because I want to use you, and I do not want to deceive."

"Deceive me, bah! You are an honest man," cried Monnier; and he seized Lebeau's hand, and shook it with warmth and vigor.

"But for you I should have been a mere grumbler. No doubt I should have cried out where the shoe pinched, and rallied against laws that vex me; but from the moment you first talked to me I became a new man. You taught me to act, as Rousseau and Madame de Grantmesnil had taught me to think and to feel. There is my brother, a grumbler too, but professes to have a wiser head than mine. He is always warning me against you—against joining a strike—against doing anything to endanger my skin. I always went by his advice till you taught me that it was well enough for women to talk and complain; men should dare and do."

"Nevertheless," said Lebeau, "your brother is a safer councillor to a *père de famille* than I. I repeat what I have so often said before: I desire and I resolve, that the Empire of M. Bonaparte shall be overthrown. I see many concurrent circumstances to render that desire and resolve of practicable fulfilment. You desire and resolve the same thing. Up to that point we can work together. I have encouraged your action only so far as it served my design; but I separate from you the moment you would ask me to aid *your* design in the hazard of experiments which the world has never yet favored, and trust me, Monnier, the world never will favor."

"That remains to be seen," said Monnier, with compressed, obstinate lips. "Forgive me, but you are not young; you belong to an old school."

"Poor young man!" said Lebeau, readjusting his spectacles, "I recognize in you the genius of Paris, be the genius good or evil.

Paris is never warned by experience. Be it so. I want you so much, your enthusiasm is so fiery, that I can concede no more to the mere sentiment which makes me say to myself, 'It is a shame to use this great-hearted, wrong-headed creature for my personal ends.' I come at once to the point—that is, the matter on which I seek you this evening. At my suggestion, you have been a ring-leader in strikes which have terribly shaken the Imperial system, more than its Ministers deem; now I want a man like you to assist in a bold demonstration against the Imperial resort to a rural priest-ridden suffrage, on the part of the enlightened working class of Paris."

"Good!" said Monnier.

"In a day or two the result of the *plébiscite* will be known. The result of universal suffrage will be enormously in favor of the desire expressed by one man."

"I don't believe it," said Monnier, stoutly. "France cannot be so hoodwinked by the priests."

"Take what I say for granted," resumed Lebeau, calmly. "On the 8th of this month we shall know the amount of the majority—some millions of French votes. I want Paris to separate itself from France, and declare against those blundering millions. I want an *emeute*, or rather a menacing *démonstration*—not a premature revolution, mind. You must avoid bloodshed."

"It is easy to say that beforehand; but when a crowd of men once meets in the streets of Paris——"

"It can do much by meeting, and cherishing resentment if the meeting be dispersed by an armed force, which it would be waste of life to resist."

"We shall see when the time comes," said Monnier, with a fierce gleam in his bold eyes.

"I tell you, all that is required at this moment is an evident protest of the artisans of Paris against the votes of the 'rurals' of France. Do you comprehend me?"

"I think so; if not, I obey. What we *ouvriers* want is what we have not got—a head to dictate action to us."

"See to this, then. Rouse the men you can command. I will take care that you have plentiful aid from foreigners. We may trust to the *confrères* of our council to enlist Poles and Italians; Gaspard le Noy will turn out the volunteer rioters at his command. Let the *émeute* be within, say a week, after the vote of the *plébiscite* is taken. You will need that time to prepare."

"Be contented—it shall be done."

"Good night, then." Lebeau leisurely took up his hat and drew on his gloves—then, as if struck by a sudden thought, he turned briskly on the artisan, and said in quick blunt tones—

"Armand Monnier, explain to me why it is that you—a Parisian artisan, the type of a class the most insubordinate, the most self-conceited, that exists on the face of the earth—take without question, with so docile a submission, the orders of a man who plainly tells you he does not sympathize in your ultimate objects of whom you really know very little, and whose views you candidly own you think are those of an old and obsolete school of political reasoners."

"You puzzle me to explain," said Monnier, with an ingenuous laugh, that brightened up features stern and hard, though comely when in repose. "Partly, because you are so straightforward, and do not talk *blague;* partly, because I don't think the class I belong to would stir an inch unless we had a leader of another class—and you give *me* at least that leader. Again, you go to that first stage which we all agree to take, and——well, do you want me to explain more?"

"Yes."

"*Eh bien!* you have warned me like an honest man; like an honest man I warn you. That first step we take together; I want to go a step further; you retreat, you say 'No:' I reply you are committed; that further step you must take, or I cry '*traitre!—à la lanterne!*' You talk of 'superior experience:' bah! what does experience really tell you? Do you suppose that Philippe Egalité, when he began to plot against Louis XVI., meant to vote for his kinsman's execution by the guillotine? Do you suppose that Robespierre, when he commenced his career as the foe of capital punishment, foresaw that he should be the Minister of the Reign of Terror? Not a bit of it. Each was committed by his use of those he designed for his tools: so must you be—or you perish."

Lebeau, leaning against the door, heard the frank avowal he had courted without betraying a change of countenance. But when Armand

Monnier had done, a slight movement of his lips showed emotion; was it of fear or disdain?

"Monnier," he said gently; "I am so much obliged to you for the manly speech you have made. The scruples which my conscience had before entertained are dispelled. I dreaded lest I, a declared wolf, might seduce into peril an innocent sheep. I see I have to deal with a wolf of younger vigor and sharper fangs than myself—so much the better: obey my orders now; leave it to time to say whether I obey yours later. *Au revoir.*"

CHAPTER VI.

ISAURA'S apartment, on the following Thursday evening, was more filled than usual. Besides her habitual devotees in the artistic or literary world, there were diplomatists and deputies commixed with many fair chiefs of *la jeunesse dorée;* amongst the latter the brilliant Enguerrand de Vandemar, who, deeming the acquaintance of every celebrity essential to his own celebrity, in either Carthage, the *beau monde* or the *demi-monde*, had, two Thursdays before, made Louvier attend her *soirée* and present him. Louvier, though gathering to his own *salons* authors and artists, very rarely favored their rooms with his presence; he did not adorn Isaura's party that evening. But Duplessis was there, in compensation. It had chanced that Valérie had met Isaura at some house in the past winter, and conceived an enthusiastic affection for her: since then, Valérie came very often to see her, and made a point of dragging with her to Isaura's Thursday *réunions* her obedient father. *Soirées*, musical or literary, were not much in his line; but he had no pleasure like that of pleasing his spoilt child. Our old friend Frederic Lemercier was also one of Isaura's guests that night. He had become more and more intimate with Duplessis, and Duplessis had introduced him to the fair Valérie as "*un jeune homme plein de moyens, qui ira loin.*"

Savarin was there of course, and brought with him an English gentleman of the name of Bevil, as well known in Paris as in London—invited everywhere—popular everwhere, —one of those welcome contributors to the luxuries of civilized society who trade in gossip, sparing no pains to get the pick of it, and exchanging it liberally sometimes for a haunch of venison, sometimes for a cup of tea. His gossip not being adulterated with malice was in high repute for genuine worth.

If Bevil said, "This story is a fact," you no more thought of doubting him than you would doubt Rothschild if he said, "This is Lafitte of '48."

Mr. Bevil was at present on a very short stay at Paris, and, naturally wishing to make the most of his time, he did not tarry besides Savarin, but, after being introduced to Isaura, flitted here and there through the assembly.

> "Apis Matinœ—
> More modoque—
> Grata carpentis thyma."—

The bee proffers honey, but bears a sting.

The room was at its fullest when Gustave Rameau entered, accompanied by Monsieur de Mauléon.

Isaura was agreeably surprised by the impression made on her by the Vicomte's appearance and manner. His writings, and such as she had heard of his earlier repute, had prepared her to see a man decidedly old, of withered aspect and sardonic smile—aggressive in demeanor—forward or contemptuous in his very politeness—a Mephistopheles engrafted on the stem of a Don Juan. She was startled by the sight of one who, despite his forty-eight years—and at Paris a man is generally older at forty-eight than he is elsewhere —seemed in the zenith of ripened manhood—startled yet more by the singular modesty of a deportment too thoroughly high-bred not to be quietly simple—startled most by a melancholy expression in eyes that could be at times soft, though always so keen, and in the grave pathetic smile which seemed to disarm censure of past faults in saying, "I have known sorrows."

He did not follow up his introduction to his young hostess by any of the insipid phrases of compliment to which she was accustomed; but, after expressing in grateful terms his thanks for the honor she had permitted Rameau to confer on him, he moved aside, as if he had no right to detain her from other guests more worthy her notice, towards the doorway, taking his place by Enguerrand amidst a group of men of whom Duplessis was the central figure.

At that time—the first week in May, 1870—all who were then in Paris will remember there were two subjects uppermost in the mouths of men: first, the *plébiscite;* secondly, the conspiracy to murder the Emperor—which the disaffected consider to be a mere fable, a pretence got up in time to serve the *plébiscite* and prop the Empire.

Upon this latter subject Duplessis had been expressing himself with unwonted animation. A loyal and earnest Imperialist, it was only with effort that he could repress his scorn of that meanest sort of gossip which is fond of ascribing petty motives to eminent men.

To him nothing could be more clearly evident than the reality of this conspiracy, and he had no tolerance for the malignant absurdity of maintaining that the Emperor or his Ministers could be silly and wicked enough to accuse seventy-two persons of a crime which the police had been instructed to invent.

As De Mauléon approached, the financier brought his speech to an abrupt close. He knew in the Vicomte de Mauléon the writer of articles which had endangered the Government, and aimed no pointless shafts against its Imperial head.

"My cousin," said Enguerrand, gaily, as he exchanged a cordial shake of the hand with Victor, "I congratulate you on the fame of journalist, into which you have vaulted, armed *cap-à-pie*, like a knight of old into his saddle; but I don't sympathize with the means you have taken to arrive at that renown. I am not myself an Imperialist—a Vandemar can be scarcely that. But if I am compelled to be on board a ship, I don't wish to take out its planks and let in an ocean, when all offered to me instead is a crazy tub and a rotten rope."

Très bien," said Duplessis, in parliamentary tone and phrase.

"But," said De Mauléon, with his calm smile, "would you like the captain of the ship, when the sky darkened and the sea rose, to ask the common sailors 'whether they approved his conduct on altering his course or shortening his sail?' Better trust to a crazy tub and a rotten rope than to a ship in which the captain consults a *plebiscite*."

"Monsieur," said Duplessis, "your metaphor is ill chosen—no metaphor indeed is needed. The head of the State was chosen by the voice of the people, and, when required to change the form of administration which the people had sanctioned, and inclined to do so from motives the most patriotic and liberal, he is bound again to consult the people from whom he holds his power. It is not, however, of the *plébiscite* we were conversing, so much as of the atrocious conspiracy of assassins—so happily discovered in time. I presume that Monsieur de Mauléon must share the indignation which true Frenchmen of every party must feel against a combination united by the purpose of murder."

The Vicomte bowed, as in assent. "But do you believe," asked a Liberal Deputé, "that such a combination existed, except in the visions of the police or the cabinet of a Minister?"

Duplessis looked keenly at De Mauléon while this question was put to him. Belief or disbelief in the conspiracy was with him, and with many, the test by which a sanguinary revolutionist was distinguished from an honest politician.

"*Ma foi*," answered De Mauléon, shrugging his shoulders, "I have only one belief left; but that is boundless. I believe in the folly of mankind in general, and of Frenchmen in particular. That seventy-two men should plot the assassination of a sovereign on whose life interests so numerous and so watchful depend, and imagine they could keep a secret which any drunkard amongst them would blab out, any tatterdemalion would sell, is a *bêtise* so gross that I think it highly probable. But pardon me if I look upon the politics of Paris much as I do upon its mud—one must pass through it when one walks in the street. One changes one's shoes before entering the *salon*. A word with you, Enguerrand,"—and taking his kinsman's arm he drew him aside from the circle. "What has become of your brother? I see nothing of him now." "Oh, Raoul," answered Enguerrand, throwing himself on a couch in a recess, and making room for De Mauléon beside him—"Raoul is devoting himself to the distressed *ouvriers* who have chosen to withdraw from work. When he fails to persuade them to return, he forces food and fuel on their wives and children. My good mother encourages him in this costly undertaking, and no one but you, who believe in the infinity of human folly, would credit me when I tell you that his eloquence has drawn from me all the

argent de poche I get from our shop. As for himself he has sold his horses, and even grudges a cab-fare, saying, '*That* is a meal for a family.' Ah! if he had but gone into the Church, what a saint would have deserved canonization!"

"Do not lament—he will probably have what is a better claim than mere saintship on Heaven—martyrdom," said De Mauléon, with a smile in which sarcasm disappeared in melancholy. "Poor Raoul!" and what of my other cousin, the *beau Marquis?* Several months ago his Legitimist faith seemed vacillating—he talked to me very fairly about the duties a Frenchman owed to France, and hinted that he should place his sword at the command of Napoléon III. I have not yet heard of him as a *soldat de France*—I hear a great deal of him as a *viveur de Paris*."

"Don't you know why his desire for a military career was frost-bitten?"

"No! why?"

"Alain came from Bretagne profoundly ignorant of most things known to a *gamin* of Paris. When he conscientiously overcame the scruples natural to one of his name, and told the Duchesse de Tarascon that he was ready to fight under the flag of France whatever its color, he had a vague reminiscence of ancestral Rochebriants earning early laurels at the head of their regiments. At all events he assumed as a matter of course that he, in the first rank as *gentilhomme*, would enter the army, if as a *sous-lieutenant*, still as *gentilhomme*. But when told that, as he had been at no military college, he could only enter the ranks as a private soldier—herd with private soldiers — for at least two years before passing through the grade of corporal, his birth, education, habits of life could, with great favor, raise him to the station of a *sous-lieutenant*, you may conceive that the martial ardor of a Rochebriant was somewhat cooled."

"If he knew what the dormitory of French privates is, and how difficult a man well educated, well brought up, finds it, first, to endure the coarsest ribaldry and the loudest blasphemy, and then, having endured and been compelled to share them, ever enforce obedience and discipline as a superior among those with whom just before he was an equal his ardor would not have been merely cooled—it would have been changed into despair for the armies of France, if hereafter they are met by those whose officers have been trained to be officers from the outset, and have embibed from their cradle an education not taught to the boy-pedants from school—the twofold education how with courtesy to command, how with dignity to obey. To return to Rochebriant, such *salons* as I frequent are somewhat formal—as befits my grave years and my modest income; I may add, now that you know my vocation—befits me also as a man who seeks rather to be instructed than amused. In those *salons*, I did, last year, sometimes, however, meet Rochebriant—as I sometimes still meet you; but of late he has deserted such sober *réunions*, and I hear with pain that he is drifting among those rocks against which my own youth was shipwrecked. Is the report true?"

"I fear," said Enguerrand, reluctantly, "that at least the report is not unfounded. And my conscience accuses me of having been to blame in the first instance. You see, when Alain made terms with Louvier by which he obtained a very fair income, if prudently managed, I naturally wished that a man of so many claims to social distinction, and who represents the oldest branch of my family, should take his right place in our world of Paris. I gladly therefore presented him to the houses and the men most *à la mode*—advised him as to the sort of establishment, in apartments, horses, etc., which it appeared to me that he might reasonably afford—I mean such as, with his means, I should have prescribed to myself——"

"Ah! I understand. But you, dear Enguerrand, are a born Parisian, every inch of you: and a born Parisian is, whatever be thought to the contrary, the best manager in the world. He alone achieves the difficult art of uniting thrift with show. It is your Provincial, who comes to Paris in the freshness of undimmed youth, who sows his whole life on its barren streets. I guess the rest: Alain is ruined."

Enguerrand, who certainly was so far a born Parisian that, with all his shrewdness and *savoir faire*, he had a wonderfully sympathetic heart, very easily moved, one way or the other —Enguerrand winced at his elder kinsman's words, complimentarily reproachful, and said in unwonted tones of humility, "Cousin, you are cruel, but you are in the right. I did not calculate sufficiently on the chances of Alain's

head being turned. Hear my excuse. He seemed to me so much more thoughtful than most at our age are, so much more stately and proud; well, also so much more pure, so impressed with the responsibilities of station, so bent on retaining the old lands in Bretagne; by habit and rearing so simple and self-denying,—that I took it for granted he was proof against stronger temptations than those which a light nature like my own puts aside with a laugh. And at first I had no reason to think myself deceived, when, some months ago, I heard that he was getting into debt, losing at play, paying court to female vampires, who drain the life-blood of those on whom they fasten their fatal lips. Oh, then I spoke to him earnestly?"

"And in vain?"

"In vain. A certain Chevalier de Finisterre, whom who may have heard of——"

"Certainly, and met; a friend of Louvier's——"

"The same man—has obtained over him an influence which so far subdues mine, that he almost challenged me when I told him his friend was a scamp. In fine, though Alain and I have not actually quarrelled, we pass each other with, '*Bon jour, mon ami.*'"

"Hum! My dear Engerrand, you have done all you could. Flies will be flies, and spiders, spiders, till the earth is destroyed by a comet. Nay, I met a distinguished naturalist in America who maintained that we shall find flies and spiders in the next world."

"You have been in America? Ah, true—I remember, California!"

"Where have I not been? Tush! music—shall I hear our fair hostess sing?"

"I am afraid not to-night: because Madame S—— is to favor us, and the Signorina makes it a rule not to sing at her own house when professional artists do. You must hear the Cicogna quietly some day; such a voice nothing like it."

Madame S——, who, since she had learned that there was no cause to apprehend that Isaura might become her professional rival, conceived for her a wonderful affection, and willingly contributed her magnificent gifts of song to the charms of Isaura's *salon*, now began a fragment from "*I Puritani*," which held the audience as silent as the ghosts listening to Sappho; and when it was over, several of the guests slipped away, especially those who disliked music, and feared Madame S—— might begin again. Enguerrand was not one of such soulless recreants, but he had many other places to go to. Besides Madame S—— was no novelty to him.

De Mauléon now approached Isaura, who was seated next to Valérie, and after well-merited eulogium on Madame S.'s performance, slid into some critical comparisons betwee that singer and those of a former generation, which interested Isaura, and evinced to her quick perceptions that kind of love for music which has been refined by more knowledge of the art than is common to mere amateurs.

"You have studied music, Monsieur de Mauléon," she said. "Do you not perform yourself?"

"I? no. But music has always had a fatal attraction for me. I ascribe half the errors of my life to that temperament which makes me too fascinated by harmonies—too revolted by discords."

"I should have thought such a temperament would have led from errors—are not errors discords?"

"To the inner sense, yes; but to the outer sense not always. Virtues are often harsh to the ear—errors very sweet-voiced. The sirens did not sing out of tune. Better to stop one's ears than glide on Scylla or be merged into Charybdis."

"Monsieur," cried Valérie, with a pretty *brusquerie* which became her well, "you talk like a Vandal."

"It is, I think, by Mademoiselle Duplessis that I have the honor to be rebuked. Is Monsieur your father very susceptible to music?"

"Well, I cannot say that he cares much for it. But then his mind is so practical——"

"And his life so successful. No Scylla, no Charybdis for him. However, Mademoiselle, I am not quite the Vandal you suppose. I do not say that susceptibility to the influence of music may not be safe, nay, healthful to others—it was not so to me in my youth. It can do me no harm now."

Here Duplessis came up, and whispered his daughter "it was time to leave; they had promised the Duchesse de Tarascon to assist at the *soirée* she gave that night." Valérie

took her father's arm with a brightening smile and a heightened color. Alain de Rochbriant might probably be at the Duchesse's.

"Are you not going also to the Hotel de Tarascon, M. de Mauléon?" asked Duplessis.

"No; I was never there but once. The Duchesse is an Imperialist, at once devoted and acute, and no doubt very soon divined my lack of faith in her idols."

Duplessis frowned, and hastily led Valérie away.

In a few minutes the room was comparatively deserted. De Mauléon, however, lingered by the side of Isaura till all the other guests were gone. Even then he lingered still, and renewed the interrupted conversation with her, the Venosta joining therein; and so agreeable did he make himself to her Italian tastes by a sort of bitter-sweet wisdom like that of her native proverbs—comprising much knowledge of mankind on the unflattering side of humanity in that form of pleasantry which has a latent sentiment of pathos—that the Venosta exclaimed, "Surely you must have been brought up in Florence!"

There was that in De Mauléon's talk hostile to all which we call romance that excited the imagination of Isaura, and compelled her instinctive love for whatever is more sweet, more beautiful, more ennobling on the many sides of human life, to oppose what she deemed the paradoxes of a man who had taught himself to belie even his own nature. She became eloquent and her countenance, which in ordinary moments owed much of its beauty to an expression of meditative gentleness, was now lighted up by the energy of earnest conviction —the enthusiasm of an impassioned zeal.

Gradually De Mauléon relaxed his share in the dialogue, and listened to her, rapt and dreamingly as in his fiery youth he had listened to the songs of the sirens. No siren Isaura! She was defending her own cause, though unconsciously—defending the vocation of art, as the embellisher of external nature, and more than embellisher of the nature which dwells crude, but plastic, in the soul of man; indeed therein the creator of a new nature, strengthened, expanded, and brightened in proportion as it accumulates the ideas that tend beyond the boundaries of the visible and material nature, which is finite; for ever seeking in the unseen and the spiritual the goals in the infinite which it is their instinct to divine. "That which you contemptuously call romance," said Isaura, "is not essential only to poets and artists. The most real side of every life, from the earliest dawn of mind in the infant, is the romantic.

"When the child is weaving flower-chains, chasing butterflies, or sitting apart and dreaming what it will do in the future, is not *that* the child's real life, and yet is it not also the romantic?"

"But there comes a time when we weave no flower-chains, and chase no butterflies."

"Is it so?—still on one side of life, flowers and butterflies may be found to the last; and at least to the last are there no dreams of the future? Have you no such dreams at this moment? and without the romance of such dreams, would there be any reality to human life which could distinguish it from the life of the weed that rots on Lethè?"

"Alas, Mademoiselle," said De Mauléon, rising to take leave, "your argument must rest without answer. I would not, if I could, confute the beautiful belief that belongs to youth, fusing into one rainbow all the tints that can color the world. But the Signora Venosta will acknowledge the truth of an old saying expressed in every civilized language, but best, perhaps, in that of the Florentine—'You might as well physic the dead as instruct the old.'"

"But you are not old!" said the Venosta, with Florentine politeness,—"you! not a gray hair."

"'Tis not by the gray of the hair that one knows the age of the heart," answered De Mauléon, in another paraphrase of Italian proverb, and he was gone.

As he walked homeward through deserted streets, Victor de Meuléon thought to himself, "Poor girl, how I pity her! married to a Gustave Rameau—married to any man—nothing in the nature of man, be he the best and the cleverest, can ever realize the dream of a girl who is pure and has genius. Ah, is not the converse true? What girl, the best and the cleverest, comes up to the ideal of even a commonplace man—if he ever dreamed of an ideal!" Then he paused, and in a moment or so afterwards his thought knew such questionings no more. It turned upon personalities, on stratagems and plots, on ambition. The man had more than his share of that pe-

culiar susceptibility which is one of the characteristics of his countrymen—susceptibility to immediate impulse—susceptibility to fleeting impressions. It was a key to many mysteries in his character when he owned his subjection to the influence of music, and in music recognized not the seraph's harp, but the siren's song. If you could have permanently fixed Victor de Mauléon in one of the good moments of his life—even now—some moment of exquisite kindness—of superb generosity—of dauntless courage—you would have secured a very rare specimen of noble humanity. But so to fix him was impossible.

That impulse of the moment vanished the moment after; swept aside by the force of his very talents—talents concentrated by his intense sense of individuality—sense of wrongs or of rights—interests or objects personal to himself. He extended the royal saying, "*L'état, c'est moi*," to words far more grandiloquent. "The universe, 'tis I." The Venosta would have understood him and smiled approvingly, if he had said with good-humored laugh, "I dead, the world is dead!" That is an Italian proverb, and means much the same thing.

BOOK EIGHTH.

CHAPTER I.

On the 8th of May the vote of the *ptébiscite* was recorded,—between seven and eight millions of Frenchmen in support of the Imperial programme—in plain words, of the Emperor himself—against a minority of 1,500,000. But among the 1,500,000 were the old throne-shakers—those who compose and those who lead the mob of Paris. On the 14th, as Rameau was about to quit the editorial bureau of his printing-office, a note was brought in to him which strongly excited his nervous system. It contained a request to see him forthwith, signed by those two distinguished foreign members of the Secret Council of Ten, Thaddeus Loubinsky and Leonardo Raselli.

The meetings of that Council had been so long suspended that Rameau had almost forgotten its existence. He gave orders to admit the conspirators. The two men entered, —the Pole, tall, stalwart, and with martial stride—the Italian, small, emaciated, with skulking, noiseless, cat-like step,—but looking wondrous threadbare, and in that state called "shabby genteel," which belongs to the man who cannot work for his livelihood, and assumes a superiority over the man who can. Their outward appearance was in notable discord with that of the poet-politician—he all new in the last fashions of Parisian elegance, and redolent of Parisian prosperity and *extrait de Mousseline!*

"*Confrère*," said the Pole, seating himself on the edge of the table, while the Italian leaned against the mantel-piece, and glanced round the room with furtive eye, as if to detect its innermost secrets, or decide where safest to drop a lucifer-match for its conflagration,— "*confrère*," said the Pole, "your country needs you——"

"Rather, the cause of all countries," interposed the Italian, softly,—"Humanity."

"Please to explain yourselves; but stay, wait a moment," said Rameau; and rising, he went to the door, opened it, looked forth, ascertained that the coast was clear, then reclosed the door as cautiously as a prudent man closes his pocket whenever shabby-genteel visitors appeal to him in the cause of his country, still more if they appeal in that of Humanity.

"*Confrère*," said the Pole, "this day a movement is to be made—a demonstration on behalf of your country——"

"Of Humanity," again softly interposed the Italian.

"Attend and share it," said the Pole.

"Pardon me," said Rameau, "I do not know what you mean. I am now the editor of a journal in which the proprietor does not countenance violence; and if you come to me as a member of the Council, you must be aware that I should obey no orders but that of its president, whom I have not seen for nearly a year; indeed, I know not if the Council still exists."

"The Council exists, and with it the obligations it imposes," replied Thaddeus.

"Pampered with luxury," here the Pole raised his voice, "do you dare reject the voice of Poverty and Freedom?"

"Hush, dear but too vehement *confrère*," murmured the bland Italian; "permit me to dispel the reasonable doubts of our *confrère*," and he took out of his breast-pocket a paper which he presented to Rameau; on it were written these words:—

"This evening, May 14th. Demonstration. —Faubourg du Temple.—Watch events, under orders of A. M. Bid the youngest member take that first opportunity to test nerves and discretion. He is not to act, but to observe."

No name was appended to this instruction, but a cipher intelligible to all members of the

Council as significant of its president, Jean Lebeau.

"If I err not," said the Italian, "Citizen Rameau is our youngest *confrère*."

Rameau paused. The penalties for disobedience to an order of the President of the Council were too formidable to be disregarded. There could be no doubt that, though his name was not mentioned, he, Rameau, was accurately designated as the youngest member of the Council. Still, however he might have owned his present position to the recommendation of Labeau, there was nothing in the conversation of M. de Mauléon which would warrant participation in a popular *èmeute* by the editor of a journal belonging to that mocker of the mob. Ah! but—and here again he glanced over the paper—he was asked "not to act, but to observe." To observe was the duty of a journalist. He might go to the demonstration as De Mauléon confessed *he* had gone to the Communist Club, a philosophical spectator.

"You do not disobey this order?" said the Pole, crossing his arms.

"I shall certainly go into the Faubourg du Temple this evening," answered Rameau, drily; "I have business that way."

"*Bon!*" said the Pole; "I did not think you would fail us, though you do edit a journal which says not a word on the duties that bind the French people to the resuscitation of Poland."

"And is not pronounced in decided accents upon the cause of the human race," put in the Italian, whispering.

"I do not write the political articles in '*Le Sens Commun*,'" answered Rameau; "and I suppose that our president is satisfied with them since he recommended me to the preference of the person who does. Have you more to say? Pardon me, my time is precious, for it does not belong to me."

"Eno'!" said the Italian, "we will detain you no longer." Here, with bow and smile, he glided towards the door.

"*Confrère*," muttered the Pole, lingering, "you must have become very rich!—do not forget the wrongs of Poland—I am their Representative—I—speaking in that character, not as myself individually—*I* have not breakfasted!"

Rameau, too thoroughly Parisian not to be as lavish of his own money as he was envious of another's, slipped some pieces of gold into the Pole's hand. The Pole's bosom heaved with manly emotion: "These pieces bear the effigies of the tyrant—I accept them as redeemed from disgrace by their uses to Freedom."

"Share them with Signor Raselli in the name of the same cause," whispered Rameau, with a smile he might have plagiarized from De Mauléon.

The Italian, whose ear was inured to whispers, heard and turned round as he stood at the threshold.

"No, *confrère* of France—no, *confrère* of Poland—I am Italian. All ways to take the life of an enemy are honorable—no way is honorable which begs money from a friend."

An hour or so later, Rameau was driven in his comfortable *coupé* to Faubourg du Temple.

Suddenly, at the angle of a street, his coachman was stopped—a rough-looking man appeared at the door—"*Descends, mon petit bourgeois.*" Behind the rough-looking man were menacing faces.

Rameau was not physically a coward—very few Frenchmen are, still fewer Parisians; and still fewer, no matter what their birthplace, the men whom we call vain—the men who ever-much covet distinction, and over-much dread reproach.

"Why should I descend at your summons?" said Rameau, haughtily. *Bah!* Coachman, drive on!"

The rough-looking man opened the door, and silently extended a hand to Rameau, saying gently: "Take my advice, *mon bourgeoise.* Get out—we want your carriage. It is a day of barricades—every little helps, even your *coupé!*

While this man spoke others gesticulated; some shrieked out, "He is an employer! he thinks he can drive over the employed!" Some leader of the crowd—a Parisian crowd always has a classical leader, who has never read the classics—thundered forth, "Tarquin's car!" "Down with Tarquin!" Therewith came a yell, "*A la lanterne—Tarquin!*"

We Anglo-Saxons, of the old country or the new, are not familiarized to the dread roar of a populace delighted to have a Roman authority for tearing us to pieces; still Americans know what is Lynch law. Romeau was in danger of Lynch law, when suddenly a face

not known to him interposed between himself and the rough-looking man.

"Ha!" cried this new-comer, "my young *confrère*, Gustave Rameau, welcome! Citizens, make way. I answer for this patriot—I, Armand Monnier. He comes to help us. Is this the way you receive him?" Then in low voice to Rameau, "Come out. Give your *coupé* to the barricade. What matters such rubbish? Trust to me—I expected you. Hist! —Lebeau bids me see that you are safe."

Rameau then, seeking to drape himself in majesty,—as the aristocrats of journalism in a city wherein no other aristocracy is recognized, naturally and commendably do, when ignorance combined with physical strength asserts itself to be a power, beside which the power of knowledge is what a learned poodle is to a tiger —Rameau then descended from his *coupé*, and said to this Titan of labor, as a French marquis might have said to his valet, and as, when the French marquis has become a ghost of the past, the man who keeps a *coupé* says to the man who mends its wheels, "Honest fellow, I trust you."

Monnier led the journalist throught the mob to the rear of the barricade hastily construçted. Here were assembled very motley groups.

The majority were ragged boys, the *gamins* of Paris, commingled with several women of no reputable appearance, some dingily, some gaudily apparelled. The crowd did not appear as if the business in hand was a very serious one. Amidst the din of voices the sound of laughter rose predominant, jests and *bons mots* flew from lip to lip. The astonishing good-humor of the Parisians was not yet excited into the ferocity that grows out of it by a street contest. It was less like a popular *émeute* than a gathering of schoolboys, bent not less on fun than on mischief. But still, amid this gayer crowd were sinister, lowering faces; the fiercest were not those of the very poor, but rather of artisans, who, to judge by their dress, seemed well off—of men belonging to yet higher grades. Rameau distinguished amongst these the *médecin des pauvres*, the philosophical atheist, sundry long-haired artists, middle-aged writers for the Republican press, in close neighborhood with ruffians of villanous aspect, who might have been newly returned from the galleys. None were regularly armed; still revolvers and muskets and long knives were by no means unfrequently interspersed among the rioters. The whole scene was to Rameau a confused panorama, and the dissonant tumult of yells and laughter, of menace and joke, began rapidly to act on his impressionable nerves.

He felt that which is the prevalent character of a Parisian riot—the intoxication of an impulsive sympathy; coming there as a reluctant spectator, if action commenced he would have been borne readily into the thick of the action —he could not have helped it; already he grew impatient of the suspense of strife. Monnier having deposited him safely with his back to a wall, at the corner of a street handy for flight, if flight became expedient, had left him for several minutes, having business elsewhere. Suddenly the whisper of the Italian stole into his ear—"These men are fools. This is not the way to do business; this does not hurt the robber of Nice—Garibaldi's Nice: they should have left it to me."

"What would you do?"

"I have invented a new machine," whispered the Friend of Humanity; "it would remove all at one blow—lion and lioness, whelp and jackals—and *then* the Revolution if you will! not this paltry tumult. The cause of the human race is being frittered away. I am disgusted with Lebeau. Thrones are not overturned by *gamins*."

Before Rameau could answer, Monnier rejoined him. The artisan's face was overcast —his lips compressed, yet quivering with indignation. "Brother," he said to Rameau, "to-day the cause is betrayed"—(the word *trahi* was just then coming into vogue at Paris)— "the *blouses* I counted on are recreant. I have just learned that all is quiet in the other *quartiers* where the rising was to have been simultaneous with this. We are in a *guet-àpens*—the soldiers will be down on us in a few minutes; hark! don't you hear the distant tramp? Nothing for us but to die like men. Our blood will be avenged later. Here," and he thrust a revolver into Rameau's hand. Then with a lusty voice that rang through the crowd, he shouted "*Vive le peuple!*" The rioters caught and re-echoed the cry, mingled with other cries, "*Vive la Republique!*" "*Vive le drapeau rouge!*"

The shouts were yet at their full when a strong hand grasped Monnier's arm, and a clear

deep, but low voice thrilled through his ear—"Obey! I warned you. No fight to-day. Time not ripe. All that is needed is done—do not undo it. Hist! the *sergens de ville* are force enough to disperse the swarm of those gnats. Behind the *sergens* come soldiers who will not fraternize. Lose not one life to-day. The morrow when we shall need every man—nay, every *gamin*—will dawn soon. Answer not. Obey!" The same strong hand quitting its hold on Monnier, then seized Rameau by the wrist, and the same deep voice said, "Come with me." Remeau, turning in amaze, not unmixed with anger, saw beside him a tall man, with sombrero hat pressed close over his head, and in the blouse of a laborer, but through such disguise he recognized the pale gray whiskers and green spectacles of Lebeau. He yielded passively to the grasp that led him away down the deserted street at the angle.

At the farther end of that street, however, was heard the steady thud of hoofs.

"The soldiers are taking the mob at its rear," said Lebeau, calmly; "we have not a moment to lose—this way," and he plunged into a dismal court, into a labyrinth of lanes, followed mechanically by Rameau. They issued at last on the Boulevards, in which the usual loungers were quietly sauntering, wholly unconscious of the riot elsewhere. "Now, take that *fiacre* and go home; write down your impressions of what you have seen, and take your MS. to M. de Mauléon," Lebeau here quitted him.

Meanwhile all happened as Lebeau has predicted. The *sergens de ville*, showed themselves in front of the barricades, a small troop of mounted soldiers appeared in the rear. The mob greeted the first with yells and a shower of stones; at the sight of the last they fled in all directions; and the *sergens de ville*, calmly scaling the barricades, carried off in triumph, as prisoners of war, four *gamins*, three women, and one Irishman loudly protesting innocence, and shrieking "Murther!" So ended the first inglorious rise against the *plébiscite* and the Empire, on the 14th of May, 1870.

From Isaura Cicogna to Madame de Grantmesnil.

"*Saturday May* 21, 1870.

"I am still, dearest Eulalie, under the excitement of impressions wholly new to me. I have this day witnessed one of those scenes which take us out of our private life, not into the world of fiction, but of history in which we live as in the life of a nation. You know how intimate I have become with Valérie Duplessis She is in herself so charming in her combination of petulent wilfulness and guileless *naivete* that she might sit as a model for one of your exquisite heroines. Her father, who is in great favor at Court, had tickets for the *Salle des Etats* of the Louvre to-day—when, as the journals will tell you, the results of the *plebiscite* were formally announced to the Emperor—and I accompanied him and Valérie. I felt, on entering the hall, as if I had been living for months iu an atmosphere of false rumors, for those I chiefly meet in the circles of artists and men of letters, and the wits and *flaneurs* who haunt such circles, are nearly all hostile to the Emperor. They agree, at least, in asserting the decline of his popularity—the failure of his intellectual powers; in predicting his downfall—deriding the notion of a successor in his son. Well, I know not how to reconcile these statements with the spectacle I have beheld to-day.

"In the chorus of acclamation amidst which the Emperor entered the hall, it seemed as if one heard the voice of the France he had just appealed to. If the Fates are really weaving woe and shame in his woof, it is in hues which, to mortal eyes, seems brilliant with glory and joy.

"You will read the address of the President of the Corps Legislatif; I wonder how it will strike you. I own fairly that me it wholly carried away. At each sentiment I murmured to myself, 'Is not this true? and, if true, are France and human nature ungrateful?'

"'It is now,' said the President, 'eighteen years since France, wearied with confusion, and anxious for security, confiding in your geuius and the Napoleonic dynasty, placed in your hands, together with the Imperial Crown, the authority which the public necessity demanded.' Then the address proceeded to enumerate the blessings that ensued—social order speedily restored—the welfare of all classes of society promoted—advances in commerce and manufactures to an extent hitherto unknown. Is not this true? and, if so, are you, noble daughter of France, ungrateful?

"Then came words which touched me deeply—me, who, knowing nothing of politics, still feel the link that unites Art to Freedom: 'But from the first your Majesty has looked forward to the time when this concentration of power would no longer correspond to the aspirations of a tranquil and reassured conntry, and, foreseeing the progress of modern society, you proclaimed that "Liberty must be the crowning of the edifice."' Passing then over the previous gradual advances in popular government, the President came to the 'present self-abnegation, unprecedented in history,' and to the vindication of that *plebiscite* which I have heard so assailed—viz., Fidelity to the great principle upon which the throne was founded, required that so important a modification of a power bestowed by the people should not be made without the participation of the people themselves. Then, enumerating the millions who had welcomed the new form of government—the President paused a second or two, as if with suppressed emotion—and every one present held his breath, till, in a deeper voice, through which there ran a quiver that thrilled through the hall, he concluded with—'France is with you; France places the cause of liberty under the protection of your dynasty and the great bodies of the State.' Is France with him? I know not; but if the malcontents of France

had been in the hall at that moment, I believe they would have felt the power of that wonderful sympathy which compels all the hearts in great audiences to beat in accord, and would have answered, 'It is true.'

"All eyes now fixed on the Emperor, and I noticed few eyes which were not moist with tears. You know that calm unrevealing face of his—a face which sometimes disappoints expectation. But there is that in it which I have seen in no other, but which I can imagine to have been common to the Romans of old, the dignity that arises from self-control—an expression which seems removed from the elation of joy, the depression of sorrow—not unbecoming to one who has known great vicissitudes of Fortune, and is prepared alike for her frowns or her smiles.

"I had looked at that face while M. Schneider was reading the address—it moved not a muscle, it might have been a face of marble. Even when at moments the words were drowned in applause, and the Empress, striving at equal composure, still allowed us to see a movement of her eyelids, a tremble on her lips. The boy at his right, heir to his dynasty, had his looks fixed on the President, as if eagerly swallowing each word in the address, save once or twice, when he looked round the hall curiously, and with a smile as a mere child might look. He struck me as a mere child. Next to the Prince was one of those countenances which once seen are never to be forgotten—the true Napoléonic type, brooding, thoughtful, ominons, beautiful. But not with the serene energy that characterizes the head of the first Napoléon when Emperor, and wholly without the restless eagerness for action which is stamped in the lean outline of Napoléon when First Consul: no—in Prince Napoléon, there is a beauty to which, as woman, I could never give my heart—were I a man, the intellect that would not command my trust. But, nevertheless, in beauty it is signal, and in that beauty the expression of intellect is predominant.

"Oh, dear Eulalie, how I am digressing! The Emperor spoke—and believe me, Eulalie, whatever the journals or your compatriots may insinuate, there is in that man no sign of declining intellect or failing health. I care not what may be his years, but that man is in mind and in health as young as Cæsar when he crossed the Rubicon.

"The old cling to the past—they do not go forward to the future. There was no going back in that speech of the Emperor. There was something grand and something young in the modesty with which he put aside all references to that which his Empire had done in the past, and said with a simple earnestness of manner which I cannot adequately describe:—

"'We must more than ever look fearlessly forward to the future. Who can be opposed to the progressive march of a *regime* founded by a great people in the midst of political disturbance, and which now is fortified by liberty?'

"As he closed, the walls of that vast hall seemed to rock with an applause that must have been heard on the other side of the Seine.

"'*Vive l'Empereur!*'

"'*Vive l'Imperatrice!*

"'*Vive le Prince Imperial!*'—and the last cry was yet more prolonged than the others, as if to affirm the dynasty.

"Certainly I can imagine no Court in the old days of chivalry more splendid than the audience in that grand hall of the Louvre. To the right of the throne all the ambassadors of the civilized world in the blaze of their rich costumes and manifold orders. In the gallery at the left, yet more behind, the dresses and jewels of the *dames d'honneur* and of the great officers of State. And when the Empress rose to depart, certainly my fancy cannot picture a more queen-like image, or one that sermed more in unison with the representation of royal pomp and power. The very dress, of a color which would have been fatal to the beauty of most women equally fair—a deep golden color—(Valérie profanely called it buff) seemed so to suit the splendor of the ceremony and the day; it seemed as if that stately form stood in the midst of a sunlight reflected from itself. Day seemed darkened when that sunlight passed away.

"I fear you will think I have suddenly grown servile to the gauds and shows of mere royalty. I ask myself if that be so—I think not. Surely it is a higher sense of greatness which has been impressed on me by the pageant of to-day: I feel as if there were brought vividly before me the majesty of France, through the representation of the ruler she has crowded.

"I feel also as if there, in that hall, I found a refuge from all the warring contests in which no two seem to me in agreement as to the sort of government to be established in place of the present. The 'Liberty' clamored for by one would cut the throat of the 'Liberty' worshipped by another.

"I see a thousand phantom forms of LIBERTY—but only one living symbol of ORDER—that which spoke from a throne to-day."

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Isaura left her letter uncompleted. On the following Monday she was present at a crowded *soirée* given by M. Louvier. Among the guests were some of the most eminent leaders of the Opposition, including that vivacious master of sharp sayings, M. P. ——, whom Savarin entitled "The French Sheridan;" if laws could be framed in epigrams, he would be also the French Solon.

There, too, was Victor de Mauléon regarded by the Republican party with equal admiration and distrust. For the distrust, he himself pleasantly accounted in talk with Savarin.

"How can I expect to be trusted? I represent 'Common Sense;' every Parisian likes Common Sense in print, and cries '*Je suis trahi*' when Common Sense is to be put into action."

A group of admiring listeners had collected round one (perhaps the most brilliant) of those oratorical lawyers by whom, in France, the respect for all law has been so often talked away: he was speaking of the Saturday's ceremonial with eloquent indignation. It was a mockery to France to talk of her placing Liberty under the protection of the Empire.

There was a flagrant token of the military force under which civil freedom was held in

the very dress of the Emperor and his insignificant son; the first in the uniform of a General of Division; the second, forsooth, in that of a *sous lieutenant*. Then other liberal chiefs chimed in: "The army," said one, "was an absurd expense; it must be put down:" "The world was grown too civilized for war," said another: "The Empress was priest-ridden," said a third: "Churches might be tolerated; Voltaire built a church, but a church simply to the God of Nature, not of priestcraft,"—and so on. Isaura, whom any sneer at religion pained and revolted, here turned away from the orators to whom she had before been listening with earnest attention, and her eyes fell on the countenance of De Mauléon, who was seated opposite; the countenance startled her, its expression was so angrily scornful; that expression, however, vanished at once as De Mauléon's eye met her own, and drawing his chair near to her, he said, smiling: "Your look tells me that I almost frightened you by the ill-bred frankness with which my face must have betrayed my anger at hearing such imbecile twaddle from men who aspire to govern our turbulent France. You remember that after Lisbon was destroyed by an earthquake, a quack advertised 'pills against earthquakes.' These messieurs are not so cunning as the quack; he did not name the ingredients of his pills."

"But, M. de Mauléon," said Isaura, "if you, being opposed to the Empire, think so ill of the wisdom of those who would destroy it, are you prepared with remedies for earthquakes more efficacious than their pills?"

"I reply as a famous English statesman, when in opposition, replied to a somewhat similar question—'I don't prescribe till I'm called in.'"

"To judge by the seven millions and a half whose votes were announced on Saturday, and by the enthusiasm with which the Emperor was greeted, there is too little fear of an earthquake for a good trade to the pills of these messieurs, or for fair play to the remedies you will not disclose till called in."

"Ah, Mademoiselle! playful wit from lips not formed for politics, makes me forget all about emperors and earthquakes. Pardon that commonplace compliment—remember I am a Frenchman, and cannot help being frivolous."

"You rebuke my presumption too gently. True, I ought not to intrude political subjects on one like you—I understand so little about them—but this is my excuse, I so desire to know more."

M. de Mauléon paused, and looked at her earnestly with a kindly, half-compassionate look, wholly free from the impertinence of gallantry. "Young poetess," he said, softly, "you care for politics! Happy, indeed, is he—and whether he succeed or fail in his ambition abroad, proud should he be of an ambition crowned at home—he who has made you desire to know more of politics!"

The girl felt the blood surge to her temples. How could she have been so self-confessed? She made no reply, nor did M. de Mauléon seem to expect one; with that rare delicacy of high breeding which appears in France to belong to a former generation, he changed his tone, and went on as if there had been no interruption to the question her words implied.

"You think the Empire secure—that it is menaced by no earthquake? You deceive yourself. The Emperor began with a fatal mistake, but a mistake it needs many years to discover. He disdained the slow natural process of adjustment between demand and supply—employer and workmen. He desired—no ignoble ambition—to make Paris the wonder of the world, the eternal monument of his reign. In so doing, he sought to create artificial modes of content for revolutionary workmen. Never has any ruler had such tender heed of manual labor to the disparagement of intellectual culture. Paris is embellished; Paris is the wonder of the world: other great towns have followed its example; they, too, have their rows of palaces and temples. Well, the time comes when the magician can no longer give work to the spirits he raises; then they must fall on him and rend: out of the very houses he built for the better habitation of workmen will flock the malcontents who cry, 'Down with the Empire!' On the 21st of May you witnessed the pompous ceremony which announces to the Empire a vast majority of votes, that will be utterly useless to it except as food for gunpowder in the times that are at hand. Seven days before, on the 14th of May, there was a riot in the *Faubourg du Temple*—easily put down—you scarcely hear of it. That riot was not the less necessary to those who would warn the Empire that it is

mortal. True, the riot disperses—but it is unpunished: riot unpunished is a revolution begun. The earthquake is nearer than you think; and for that earthquake what are the pills your quacks advertise? They prate of an age too enlightened for war; they would mutilate the army—nay, disband it if they could—with Prussia next door to France. Prussia, desiring, not unreasonably, to take that place in the world which France now holds, will never challange France; if she did, she would be too much in the wrong to find a second: Prussia, knowing that she has to do with the vainest, the most conceited, the rashest antagonist that ever flourished a rapier in the face of a *spadassin*—Prussia will make France challenge her.

"And how do *ces messieurs* deal with the French army? Do they dare say to the ministers, 'Reform it?' Do they dare say, 'Prefer for men whose first duty it is to obey, discipline to equality—insist on the distinction between the officer and the private, and never confound it; Prussian officers are well-educated gentlemen, see that yours are?' Oh, no; they are democrats too stanch not to fraternize with an armed mob; they content themselves with grudging an extra *sou* to the Commissariat, and winking at the millions fraudulently pocketed by some 'Liberal contractor.' *Dieu de dieu!* France to be beaten, not as at Waterloo, by hosts combined, but in fair duel by a single foe! Oh, the shame! the shame! But as the French army is now organized, beaten she *must* be, if she meets the march of the German."

"You appall me with your sinister predictions," said Isaura; "but, happily, there is no sign of war. M. Duplessis, who is in the confidence of the Emperor, told us only the other day that Napoléon, on learning the result of the *plébiscite*, said: 'The foreign journalists who have been insisting that the Empire cannot coexist with free institutions, will no longer hint that it can be safely assailed from without.' And more than ever I may say *L'Empire c'est la paix!*"

Monsieur de Mauléon shrugged his shoulders. "The old story—Troy and the wooden horse."

"Tell me, M. de Mauléon, why do you, who so despise the Opposition, join with it in opposing the Empire?"

"Mademoiselle, the Empire opposes me; while it lasts I cannot be even a *Député;* when it is gone, heaven knows what I may be, perhaps Dictator; one thing you may rely upon, that I would, if not Dictator myself, support any man who was better fitted for that task."

"Better fitted to destroy the liberty which he pretended to fight for."

"Not exactly so," replied M. de Mauléon, imperturbably—"better fitted to establish a good government in lieu of the bad one he had fought against, and the much worse governments that would seek to turn France into a madhouse, and make the maddest of the inmates the mad doctor!" He turned away, and here their conversation ended.

But it so impressed Isaura, that the same night she concluded her letter to Madame de Grantmesnil by giving a sketch of its substance, prefaced by an ingenuous confession that she felt less sanguine confidence in the importance of the applauses which had greeted the Emperor at the Saturday's ceremonial, and ending thus: "I can but confusedly transcribe the words of this singular man, and can give you no notion of the manner and the voice which made them eloquent. Tell me, can there be any truth in his gloomy predictions? I try not to think so, but they seem to rest over that brilliant hall of the Louvre like an ominous thunder-cloud."

CHAPTER II.

THE Marquis de Rochebriant was seated in his pleasant apartment, glancing carelessly at the envelopes of many notes and letters lying yet unopened on his breakfast-table. He had risen late at noon, for he had not gone to bed till dawn. The night had been spent at his club—over the card-table—by no means to the pecuniary advantage of the Marquis. The reader will have learned, through the conversation recorded in a former chapter between De Mauléon and Enguerrand de Vandemar, that the austere *Seigneur Breton* had become a fast *viveur* of Paris. He had long since spent the remnant of Louvier's premium of £1000, and he owed a year's interest. For this last there was an excuse—M. Collot, the contractor to whom he had been advised to sell the yearly

fall of his forest-trees, had removed the trees, but had never paid a *sou* beyond the preliminary deposit; so that the revenue, out of which the mortgagee should be paid his interest, was not forthcoming. Alain had instructed M. Hebert to press the contractor; the contractor; had replied, that if not pressed he could soon settle all claims—if pressed, he must declare himself bankrupt. The Chevalier de Finisterre had laughed at the alarm which Alain conceived when he first found himself in the condition of debtor for a sum he could not pay—creditor for a sum he could not recover.

"*Bagatelle!*" said the Chevalier. "Tschu! Collot, if you give him time, is as safe as the Bank of France, and Louvier knows it. Louvier will not trouble you—Louvier, the best fellow in the world! I'll call on him and explain matters."

It is to be presumed that the Chevalier did so explain; for though both at the first, and quite recently at the second default of payment, Alain received letters from M. Louvier's professional agent, as reminders of interest due, and as requests for its payment, the Chevalier assured him that these applications were formalities of convention—that Louvier, in fact, knew nothing about them; and when dining with the great financier himself, and cordially welcomed and called "*Mon cher*," Alain had taken him aside and commenced explanation and excuse, Louvier had cut him short, "*Bah!* don't mention such trifles. There is such a thing as business—that concerns my agent; such a thing as friendship—that concerns me. *Allez!*"

Thus M. de Rochebriant, confiding in debtor and in creditor, had suffered twelve months to glide by without much heed of either, and more than lived up to an income amply sufficient indeed for the wants of an ordinary bachelor, but needing more careful thrift than could well be expected from the head of one of the most illustrious houses in France, cast so young into the vortex of the most expensive capital in the world.

The poor Marquis glided into the grooves that slant downward, much as the French Marquis of tradition was wont to slide; not that he appeared to live extravagantly, but he needed all he had for his pocket-money, and had lost that dread of being in debt which he had brought up from the purer atmosphere of Bretagne.

But there were some debts which, of course, a Rochebriant must pay—debts of honor—and Alain had, on the previous night, incurred such a debt, and must pay it that day. He had been strongly tempted, when the debt rose to the figure it had attained, to risk a change of luck; but whatever his imprudence, he was incapable of dishonesty. If the luck did not change, and he lost more, he would be without means to meet his obligations. As the debt now stood, he calculated that he could just discharge it by the sale of his *coupé* and horses. It is no wonder he left his letters unopened, however charming they might be; he was quite sure they would contain no check which would enable him to pay his debt and retain his equipage.

The door opened, and the valet announced M. le Chevalier de Finisterre—a man with smooth countenance and *air distingué*, a pleasant voice and perpetual smile.

"Well, *mon cher*," cried the Chevalier, "I hope that you recovered the favor of Fortune before you quitted her green table last night. When I left she seemed very cross with you."

"And so continued to the end," answered Alain, with well simulated gaiety—much too *bon gentilhomme* to betray rage or anguish for pecuniary loss.

"After all," said De Finnisterre, lighting his cigarette, "the uncertain goddess could not do you much harm; the stakes were small, and your adversary, the Prince, never goes double or quits."

"Nor I either. 'Small,' however, is a word of relative import; the stakes might be small to you, to me large. *Entre nous, cher ami*, I am at the end of my purse, and I have only this consolation—I am cured of play: not that I leave the complaint, the complaint leaves me; it can no more feed on me that a fever can feed on a skeleton."

"Are you serious?"

"As serious as a mourner who has just buried his all."

"His all? Tut, with such an estate as Rochebriant!"

For the first time in that talk Alain's countenance became overcast.

"And how long will Rochebriant be mine? You know that I hold it at the mercy of the

mortgagee, whose interest has not been paid, and who could, if he so pleased, *issue notice*, take proceedings—that——"

"*Peste!*" interrupted De Finisterre; "Louvier take proceedings! Louvier, the best fellow in the world! But don't I see his handwriting on that envelope? No doubt an invitation to dinner."

Alain took up the letter thus singled forth from a miscellany of epistles, some in female handwritings, unsealed but ingeniously twisted into Gordian knots—some also in female handwritings, carefully sealed—others in ill-looking envelopes, addressed in bold, legible, clerk-like caligraphy. Taken altogether these epistles had a character in common; they betokened the correspondence of a *viveur*, regarded from the female side as young, handsome, well-born; on the male side, as a *viveur* who had forgotten to pay his hosier and tailor.

Louvier wrote a small, not very intelligible, but very masuline hand, as most men who think cautiously and act promptly do write. The letter ran thus:—

"*Cher petit Marquis*" (at that commencement Alain haughtily raised his head and bit his lips),

"CHER PETIT MARQUIS,—It is an age since I have seen you. No doubt my humble *soirees* are too dull for a *beau seigneur* so courted. I forgive you. Would I were a *beau signeur* at your age! Alas! I am only a commonplace man of business, growing old, too. Aloft from the world in which I dwell, you can scarcely be aware that I have embarked a great part of my capital in building speculations. There is a Rue de Louvier that runs its drains right through my purse. I am obliged to call in the moneys due to me. My agent informs me that I am just 7,000 louis short of the total I need—all other debts being paid in—and that there is a trifle more than 7,000 louis owed to me as interest on my *hypotheque* on Rochebriant: kindly pay into his hands before the end of this week that sum. You have been too lenient to Collot, who must owe you more than that. Send agent to him. *Desole* to trouble you, and am *au desespoir* to think that my own pressing necessities compel me to urge you to take so much trouble. *Mais que faire?* The Rue de Louvier stops the way, and I must leave it to my agent to clear it.

"Accept all my excuses, with the assurance of my sentiments the most cordial.

"PAUL LOUVIER."

Alain tossed the letter to De Finisterre. "Read that from the best fellow in the world."

The Chevalier laid down his cigarette and read. "*Diable!*" he said, when he returned the letter and resumed the cigarette—"*Diable!* Louvier must be much pressed for money, or he would not have written in this strain. What does it matter? Collot owes you more than 7000 louis. Let your lawyer get them, and go to sleep with both ears on your pillow."

"Ah! you think Collot can pay if he will?"

"*Ma foi!* did not M. Gandrin tell you that M. Collot was safe to buy your wood at more money than any one else would give?"

"Certainly," said Alain, comforted. "Gandrin left that impression on my mind. I will set him on the man. All will come right, I dare say; but if it does not come right, what would Louvier do?"

"Louvier do!" answered Finisterre, reflectively. "Well, do you ask my opinion and advice?"

"Earnestly, I ask."

"Honestly, then, I answer. I am a little on the Bourse myself—most Parisians are. Louvier has made a gigantic speculation in this new street, and with so many other irons in the fire he must want all the money he can get at. I dare say that if you do not pay him what you owe, he must leave it to his agent to take steps for announcing the sale of Rochebriant. But he detests scandal; he hates the notion of being severe; rather than that, in spite of his difficulties, he will buy Rochebriant of you at a better price than it can command at public sale. Sell it to him. Appeal to him to act generously, and you will flatter him. You will get more than the old place is worth. Invest the surplus—live as you have done, or better—and marry an heiress. *Morbleu!* a Marquis de Rochebriant, if he were sixty years old, would rank high in the matrimonial market. The more the democrats have sought to impoverish titles and laugh down historical names, the more do rich democrat fathers-in-law seek to decorate their daughters with titles and give their grandchildren the heritage of historical names. You look shocked *pauvre ami*. Let us hope, then, that Collot will pay. Set your dog—I mean your lawyer—at him; seize him by the throat!"

Before Alain had recovered from the stately silence with which he had heard this very practical counsel, the valet again appeared, and ushered in Frederic Lemercier.

There was no cordial acquaintance between the visitors. Lemercier was chafed at finding

himself supplanted in Alain's intimate companionship by so new a friend, and De Finisterre affected to regard Lemercier as a would-be exquisite of low birth and bad taste.

Alain, too, was a little discomposed at the sight of Lemercier, remembering the wise cautions which that old college friend had wasted on him at the commencement of his Parisian career, and smitten with vain remorse that the cautions had been so arrogantly slighted.

It was with some timidity that he extended his hand to Frederic, and he was surprised as well as moved by the more than usual warmth with which it was grasped by the friend he had long neglected. Such affectionate greeting was scarcely in keeping with the pride which characterized Frederic Lemercier.

"*Ma foi!*" said the Chevalier, glancing towards the clock, "how time flies! I had no idea it was so late. I must leave you now, my dear Rochebriant. Perhaps we shall meet at the club later—I dine there to-day. *Au plaisir*, M. Lemercier."

CHAPTER III.

When the door had closed on the Chevalier, Frederic's countenance became very grave. Drawing his chair near to Alain, he said: "We have not seen much of each other lately,—nay, no excuses; I am well aware that it could scarcely be otherwise. Paris has grown so large and so subdivided into sets, that the best friends belonging to different sets become as divided as if the Atlantic flowed between them. I come to-day in consequence of something I have just heard from Duplessis. Tell me, have you got the money for the wood you sold to M. Collot a year ago?"

"No," said Alain, falteringly.

"Good heavens! none of it?"

"Only the deposit of ten per cent. which of course I spent, for it formed the greater part of my income. What of Collot? Is he really unsafe?"

"He is ruined, and has fled the country. His flight was the talk of the Bourse this morning. Duplessis told me of it."

Alain's face paled. "How is Louvier to be paid? Read that letter!"

Lemercier rapidly scanned his eye over the contents of Louvier's letter.

"It is true, then, that you owe this man a year's interest—more than 7,000 louis?"

"Somewhat more—yes. But that is not the first care that troubles me—Rochebriant may be lost, but with it not my honor. I owe the Russian Prince 300 louis, lost to him last night at *écarté*. I must find a purchaser for my *coupe* and horses; they cost me 600 louis last year,—do you know any one that will give me three?"

"Pooh! I will give you six; your *alezan* alone is worth half the money!"

"My dear Frederic, I will not sell them to you on any account. But you have so many friends——"

"Who would give their soul to say, 'I bought these horses of Rochebriant.' Of course I do. Ha! young Rameau, you are acquainted with him?"

"Rameau! I never heard of him!"

"Vanity of vanities, then what is fame! Rameau is the editor of '*Le Sens Commun*.' You read that journal?"

"Yes, it has clever articles, and I remember how I was absorbed in the eloquent *roman* which appeared in it."

"Ah! by the Signora Cicogna, with whom I think you were somewhat smitten last year."

"Last year—was I? How a year can alter a man! But my debt to the Prince. What has '*Le Sens Commun*' to do with my horses?"

"I met Rameau at Savarin's the other evening. He was making himself out a hero and a martyr; his *coupé* had been taken from him to assist in a barricade in that senseless *émeute* ten days ago; the *coupé* got smashed, the horses disappeared. He will buy one of your horses and *coupé*. Leave it to me! I know where to dispose of the other two horses. At what hour do you want the money?"

"Before I go to dinner at the club."

"You shall have it within two hours; but you must not dine at the club to-day. I have a note from Duplessis to invite you to dine with him to-day!"

"Duplessis! I know so little of him!"

"You should know him better. He is the only man who can give you sound advice as to

this difficulty with Louvier, and he will give it the more carefully and zealously because he has that enmity to Louvier which one rival financier has to another. I dine with him too. We shall find an occasion to consult him quietly; he speaks of you most kindly. What a lovely girl his daughter is!"

"I daresay. Ah! I wish I had been less absurdly fastidious. I wish I had entered the army as a private soldier six months ago; I should have been a corporal by this time! Still it is not too late. When Rochebriant is gone, I can yet say with the *Mousquetaire* in the *mélodrame:* 'I am rich—I have my honor and my sword!'

"Nonsense! Rochebriant shall be saved; meanwhile I hasten to Rameau. *Au revoir*, at the Hôtel Duplessis—seven o'clock."

Lemercier went, and in less than two hours sent the Marquis banknotes for 600 louis, requesting an order for the delivery of the horses and carriage.

That order written and signed, Alain hastened to acquit himself of his debt of honor, and contemplating his probable ruin with a lighter heart presented himself at the Hôtel Duplessis.

Duplessis made no pretensions to vie with the magnificent existence of Louvier. His house, though agreeably situated and flatteringly styled the Hôtel Duplessis, was of moderate size, very unostentatiously furnished; nor was it accustomed to receive the brilliant motley crowds which assembled in the *salons* of the elder financier.

Before that year, indeed, Duplessis had confined such entertainments as he gave to quiet men of business, or a few of the more devoted and loyal partisans of the Imperial dynasty; but since Valérie came to live with him he had extended his hospitalities to wider and livelier circles, including some celebrities in the world of art and letters as well as of fashion. Of the party assembled that evening at dinner were Isaura, with the Signora Venosta, one of the Imperial Ministers, the Colonel whom Alain had already met a Lemercier's supper, *Députés* (ardent Imperialists), and the Duchesse de Tarascon; these, with Alain and Frederic, made up the party. The conversation was not particularly gay. Duplessis himself, though an exceedingly well-read and able man, had not the genial accomplishments of a brilliant host. Constitutionally grave and habitually taciturn—though there were moments in which he was roused out of his wonted self into eloquence or wit—he seemed to-day absorbed in some engrossing train of thought. The Minister, the *Députés* and the Duchesse de Tarascon talked politics, and ridiculed the trumpery *émeute* of the 14th; exulted in the success of the *plébiscite*, and admitting, with indignation, the growing strength of Prussia,—and with scarcely less indignation, but more contempt, censuring the selfish egotism of England in disregarding the due equilibrium of the European balance of power,—hinted at the necessity of annexing Belgium as a set-off against the results of Sadowa.

Alain found himself seated next to Isaura—to the woman who had so captivated his eye and fancy on his first arrival in Paris.

Remembering his last conversation with Graham nearly a year ago, he felt some curiosity to ascertain whether the rich Englishman had proposed to her, and if so, been refused or accepted.

The first words that passed between them were trite enough, but after a little pause in the talk, Alain said—

"I think Mademoiselle and myself have an acquaintance in common—Monsieur Vane, a distinguished Englishman. Do you know if he be in Paris at present? I have not seen him for many months."

"I believe he is in London; at least, Colonel Morley met the other day a friend of his who said so."

Though Isaura strove to speak in a tone of indifference, Alain's ear detected a ring of pain in her voice: and watching her countenance, he was impressed with a saddened change in its expression. He was touched, and his curiosity was mingled with a gentler interest as he said: "When I last saw M. Vane I should have judged him to be too much under the spells of an enchantress to remain long without the pale of the circle she draws around her."

Isaura turned her face quickly towards the speaker, and her lips moved, and she said nothing audibly.

"Can there have been quarrel or misunderstanding?" thought Alain; and after that question his heart asked itself, "Supposing Isaura

were free, her affections disengaged, could he wish to woo and to win her?" and his heart answered—"Eighteen months ago thou wert nearer to her than now. Thou wert removed from her for ever when thou didst accept the world as a barrier between you; then, poor as thou wert, thou wouldst have preferred her to riches. Thou wert then sensible only of the ingenuous impulses of youth, but the moment thou saidst, 'I am Rochebriant, and having once owned the claims of birth and station, I cannot renounce them for love,' Isaura became but a dream. Now that ruin stares thee in the face—now that thou must grapple with the sternest difficulties of adverse fate—thou hast lost the poetry of sentiment which could alone give to that dream the colors and the form of human life." He could not again think of that fair creature as a prize that he might even dare to covet. And as he met her inquiring eyes, and saw her quivering lip, he felt instinctively that Graham was dear to her, and that the tender interest with which she inspired himself was untroubled by one pang of jealousy. He resumed:

"Yes, the last time I saw the Englishman he spoke with such respectful homage of one lady, whose hand he would deem it the highest reward of ambition to secure, that I cannot but feel deep compassion for him if that ambition has been foiled; and thus only do I account for his absence from Paris."

"You are an intimate friend of Mr. Vane's?"

"No, indeed, I have not that honor; our acquaintance is but slight, but it impressed me with the idea of a man of vigorous intellect, frank temper, and perfect honor."

Isaura's face brightened with the joy we feel when we hear the praise of those we love.

At this moment, Duplessis, who had been observing the Italian and the young Marquis, for the first time during dinner, broke silence.

"Mademoiselle," he said, addressing Isaura across the table, "I hope I have not been correctly informed that your literary triumph has induced you to forego the career in which all the best judges concur that your successes would be no less brilliant; surely one art does not exclude another."

Elated by Alain's report of Graham's words, by the conviction that these words applied to herself, and by the thought that her renunciation of the stage removed a barrier between them, Isaura answered, with a sort of enthusiasm—

"I know not, M. Duplessis, if one art excludes another; if their be desire to excel in each. But I have long lost all desire to excel in the art you refer to, and resigned all idea of the career in which it opens."

"So M. Vane told me," said Alain in a whisper.

"When?"

"Last year,—on the day that he spoke in terms of admiration so merited of the lady whom M. Duplessis has just had the honor to address."

All this while, Valérie, who was seated at the further end of the table beside the Minister, who had taken her into dinner, had been watching, with eyes, the anxious tearful sorrow of which none but her father had noticed, the low-voiced confidence between Alain and the friend whom till that day she had so enthusiastically loved. Hitherto she had been answering in monosyllables all attempts of the great man to draw her into conversation; but now, observing how Isaura blushed and looked down, that strange faculty in women, which we men call dissimulation, and which in them is truthfulness to their own nature, enabled her to carry off the sharpest anguish she had ever experienced by a sudden burst of levity of spirit. She caught up some commonplace the Minister had adapted to what he considered the poverty of her understanding, with a quickness of satire which startled that grave man, and he gazed at her astonished. Up to that moment he had secretly admired her as a girl well brought up—as girls fresh from a French convent are supposed to be; now, hearing her brilliant rejoinder to his stupid observation, he said inly; "*Dame!* the low birth of a financier's daughter shows itself."

But, being a clever man himself, her retort put him on his mettle, and he became, to his own amazement, brilliant himself. With that matchless quickness which belongs to Parisians, the guests around him seized the new *esprit de conversation* which had been evoked between the statesman and the child-like girl beside him; and as they caught up the ball, lightly flung among them, they thought within themselves how much more sparkling the

financier's pretty, lively daughter was than that dark-eyed young muse, of whom all the journalists of Paris were writing in a chorus of welcome and applause, and who seemed not to have a word to say worth listening to, excepting to the handsome young Marquis, whom, no doubt, she wished to fascinate.

Valérie fairly outshone Isaura in intellect and in wit; and neither Valérie nor Isaura cared, to the value of a bean-straw, about that distinction. Each was thinking only of the prize which the humblest peasant women have in common with the most brilliantly accomplished of their sex—the heart of a man beloved.

CHAPTER IV.

On the Continent generally, as we all know, men do not sit drinking wine together after the ladies retire. So when the signal was given all the guests adjourned to the *salon;* and Alain quitted Isaura to gain the ear of the Duchesse de Tarascon.

"It is long—at least long for Paris life," said the Marquis—"since my first visit to you, in company with Enguerrand de Vandemar. Much that you then said rested on my mind, disturbing the prejudices I took from Bretagne."

"I am proud to hear it, my kinsman."

"You know that I would have taken military service under the Emperor, but for the regulation which would have compelled me to enter the ranks as a private soldier."

"I sympathize with that scruple; but you are aware that the Emperor himself could not have ventured to make an exception even in your favor."

"Certainly not. I repent me of my pride; perhaps I may enlist still in some regiment sent to Algiers."

"No; there are other ways in which a Rochebriant can serve a throne. There will be an office at Court vacant soon, which would not misbecome your birth."

"Pardon me; a soldier serves his country—a courtier owns a master; and I cannot take the livery of the Emperor, though I could wear the uniform of France."

"Your distinction is childish, my kinsman," said the Duchesse, impetuously. "You talk as if the Emperor had an interest apart from the nation. I tell you that he has not a corner of his heart—not even one reserved for his son and his dynasty—in which the thought of France does not predominate."

"I do not presume, Madame la Duchesse, to question the truth of what you say; but I have no reason to suppose that the same thought does not predominate in the heart of the Bourbon. The Bourbon would be the first to say to me, 'If France needs your sword against her foes, let it not rest in the scabbard.' But would the Bourbon say, 'The place of a Rochebriant is among the *valetaille* of the Corsican's successor?'"

"Alas for poor France!" said the Duchesse; "and alas for men like you, my proud cousin, if the Corsican's successors or successor be——"

"Henry V.?" interrupted Alain, with a brightening eye.

"Dreamer! No; some descendant of the mob-kings who gave Bourbons and nobles to the *guillotine.*"

While the Duchesse and Alain were thus conversing, Isaura had seated herself by Valérie, and, unconscious of the offence she had given, addressed her in those pretty caressing terms with which young lady-friends are wont to compliment each other; but Valérie answered curtly, or sarcastically, and turned aside to converse with the Minister. A few minutes more and the party began to break up. Lemercier, however, detained Alain, whispering, "Duplesis will see us on your business so soon as the other guests have gone."

GHAPTER V.

"Monsieur le Marquis," and Duplessis, when the *salon* was cleared off all but himself and the two friends, "Lemercier has confided to me the state of your affairs in connection M. Louvier, and flatters me by thinking my advice may be of some service; if so, command me."

"I shall most gratefully accept your advice," answered Alain, "but I fear my condition defies even your ability and skill."

"Permit me to hope not, and to ask a few necessary questions. M. Louvier has consti-

tuted himself your sole Mortgagee; to what amount, at what interest, and from what annual proceeds is the interest paid?"

Herewith Alain gave details already furnished to the reader. Duplessis listened, and noted down the replies.

"I see it all," he said, when Alain had finished. "M. Louvier had pre-determined to possess himself of your estate: he makes himself sole mortgagee at a rate of interest so low that I tell you fairly, at the present value of money, I doubt if you could find any capitalist who would accept the transfer of the mortgage at the same rate. This is not like Louvier, unless he had an object to gain, and that object is your land. The revenue from your estate is derived chiefly from wood, out of which the interest due to Louvier is to be paid. M. Gandrin, in a skilfully-guarded letter, encourages you to sell the wood from your forests to a man who offers you several thousand francs more than it could command from customary buyers. I say nothing against M. Gandrin, but every man who knows Paris as I do, knows that M. Louvier can put, and has put, a great deal of money into M. Gandrin's pocket. The purchaser of your wood does not pay more than his dsposit, and has just left the country insolvent. Your purchaser, M. Collot, was an adventurous speculator; he would have bought anything at any price, provided he had time to pay; if his speculations had been lucky he would have paid. M. Louvier knew, as I knew, that M. Collot was a gambler, and the chances were that he would not pay. M. Louvier allows a year's interest on his *hypothéque* to become due—notice thereof duly given to you by his agent—now you come under the operation of the law. Of course, you know what the law is?"

"Not exactly," answered Alain, feeling frostbitten by the congealing words of his counsellor; "but I take it for granted that if I cannot pay the interest of a sum borrowed on my property, that property itself is forfeited."

"No, not quite that—the law is mild. If the interest which should be paid half-yearly remains unpaid at the end of a year, the mortgagee has a right to be impatient, has he not?"

"Certainly he has."

"Well then, *on fait un commandement tendant à saisie immobilière*—viz.: The mortgagee gives a notice that the property shall be put up for sale. Then it *is* put up for sale, and in most cases the mortgagee buys it in. Here, certainly, no competitors in the mere business way would vie with Louvier; the mortgage at 3½ per cent. covers more than the estate is apparently worth. Ah! but stop, M. le Marquis; the notice is not yet served: the whole process would take six months from the day it is served to the taking possession after the sale; in the meanwhile, if you pay the interest due, the action drops. *Courage*, M. le Marquis! Hope yet, if you condescend to call me friend."

"And me," cried Lemercier; "I will sell out of my railway shares to-morrow—see to it, Duplessis—enough to pay off the damnable interest. See to it, *mon ami*."

"Agree to that, M. le Marquis, and you are safe for another year," said Duplessis, folding up the paper on which he had made his notes, but fixing on Alain quiet eyes half concealed under dropping lids.

"Agree to that!" cried Rochebriant, rising—"agree to allow even my worst enemy to pay for me moneys I could never hope to repay—agree to allow the oldest and most confiding of my friends to do so—M. Duplessis, never! If I carried the porter's knot of an Auvergnat, I should still remain *gentilhomme* and *Breton*."

Duplessis, habitually the driest of men, rose with a moistened eye and flushing cheek—"Monsieur le Marquis, vouchsafe me the honor to shake hands with you. I, too, am by descent *gentilhomme*, by profession a speculator on the Bourse. In both capacities I approve the sentiment you have uttered. Certainly, if our friend Frederic lent you 7,000 Louis or so this year, it would be impossible for you even to foresee the year in which you could repay it; but,"—here Duplessis paused a minute, and then lowering the tone of his voice, which had been somewhat vehement and enthusiastic, into that of a colloquial good-fellowship, equally rare to the measured reserve of the financier, he asked, with a lively twinkle of his grey eye, "Did you never hear, Marquis, of a little encounter between me and M. Louvier?"

"Encounter at arms—does Louvier fight?" asked Alain, innocently.

"In his own way he is always fighting; but I

speak metephorically. You see this small house of mine—so pinched in by the houses next to it that I can neither get space for a ball-room for Valérie, nor a dining-room for more than a friendly party like that which has honored me to-day. *Et bien!* I bought this house a few years ago, meaning to buy the one next to it, and throw the two into one. I went to the proprietor of the next house, who, as I knew, wished to sell. 'Aha,' he thought, 'this is the rich Monsieur Duplessis;' and he asked me 2,000 louis more than the house was worth. We men of business cannot bear to be too much cheated; a little cheating we submit to—much cheating raises our gall. *Bref*—this was on Monday. I offered the man 1000 louis above the fair price, and gave him till Thursday to decide. Somehow or other Louvier hears of this. 'Hillo!' says Louvier, 'here is a financier who desires a *hôtel* to vie with mine!' He goes on Wednesday to my next-door neighbor. 'Friend, you want to sell your house. I want to buy—the price?' The proprietor, who does not know him by sight, says: 'It is as good as sold. M. Duplessis and I shall agree.' 'Bah! What sum did you ask M. Duplessis?' He names the sum; 2000 louis more than he can get elsewhere. 'But M. Duplessis will give me the sum.' 'You ask too little. I will give 3000. A fig for M. Duplessis! I am Monsieur Louvier.' So when I call on Thursday the house is sold. I reconcile myself easily enough to the loss of space for a larger dining-room; but though Valérie was then a child at a convent, I was sadly disconcerted by the thought that I could have no *salle de bal* ready for her when she came to reside with me. Well, I say to myself, patience; I owe M. Louvier a good turn; my time to pay him off will come. It does come, and very soon. M. Louvier buys an estate near Paris—builds a superb villa. Close to his property is a rising forest ground for sale. He goes to the proprietor: says the proprietor to himself, 'The great Louvier wants this,' and adds 5000 louis to its market price. Louvier, like myself, can't bear to be cheated egregiously. Louvier offers 2000 louis more than the man could fairly get, and leaves him till Saturday to consider. I hear of this—speculators hear of everything. On Friday night I go to the man and I give him 6,000 louis, where he had asked 5,000. Fancy Louvier's face the next day! But there my revenge only begins," continued Duplessis chuckling inwardly. "My forest looks down on the villa he is building. I only wait till his villa is built, in order to send to my architect and say, Build me a villa at least twice as grand as M. Louvier's, then clear away the forest trees, so that every morning he may see my palace dwarfing into insignificance his own."

"Bravo!" cried Lemercier, clapping his hands. Lemercier had the spirit of party, and felt for Duplessis, against Louvier, much as in England Whig feels against Tory, or *vice versâ*.

"Perhaps now," resumed Duplessis more soberly,—"perhaps now, M. le Marquis, you may understand why I humiliate you by no sense of obligation if I say that M. Louvier shall not be the Seigneur de Rochebriant if I can help it. Give me a line of introduction to your Breton lawyer and to Mademoiselle your aunt—let me have your letters early to-morrow. I will take the afternoon train. I know not how many days I may be absent, but I shall not return till I have carefully examined the nature and conditions of your property. If I see my way to save your estate, and give a *mauvais quart d'heur* to Louvier, so much the better for you, M. le Marquis; If I cannot, I will say frankly, 'Make the best terms you can with your creditor.'"

"Nothing can be more delicately generous than the way you put it," said Alain; "but pardon me, if I say that the pleasantry with which you narrate your grudge against M. Louvier does not answer its purpose in diminishing my sense of obligation." So, linking his arm in Lemercier's, Alain made his bow and withdrew.

When his guests had gone, Duplessis remained seated in meditation—apparently pleasant meditation, for he smiled while indulging it; he then passed through the reception-rooms to one at the far end appropriated to Valérie as a boudoir or morning-room, adjoining her bed-chamber; he knocked gently at the door, and, all remaining silent within, he opened it noiselessly and entered. Valérie was reclining on the sofa near the window—her head drooping, her hands clasped on her knees. Duplessis neared her with tender stealthy steps, passed his arm round her, and drew her head towards her his bosom. "Child!" he murmured; "my child! my only one!"

At that soft loving voice, Valérie flung her arms round him, and wept aloud like an infant in trouble. He seated himself beside her, and wisely suffered her to weep on, till her passion had exhausted itself; he then said, half fondly, half chidingly: "have you forgotten our conversation only three days ago? Have you forgotten that I then drew forth the secret of your heart? Have you forgotten what I promised you in return for your confidence? and a promise to you have I ever yet broken?"

"Father! father! I am so wretched, and so ashamed of myself for being wretched! Forgive me. No, I do not forget your promise; but who can promise to dispose of the heart of another? and that heart will never be mine. But bear with me a little, I shall soon recover."

"Valérie, when I made you the promise you now think I cannot keep, I spoke only from that conviction of power to promote the happiness of a child which nature implants in the heart of parents; and it may be also from the experience of my own strength of will, since that which I have willed I have always won. Now I speak on yet surer ground. Before the year is out you shall be the beloved wife of Alain de Rochebriant. Dry your tears and smile on me, Valérie. If you will not see in me mother and father both, I have double love for you, motherless child of her who shared the poverty of my youth, and did not live to enjoy the wealth which I hold as a trust for that heir to mine all which she left me."

As this man thus spoke you would scarcely have recognized in him the cold saturnine Duplessis, his countenance became so beautified by the one soft feeling which care and contest, ambition and money-seeking, had left unaltered in his heart. Perhaps there is no country in which the love of parent and child, especially of father and daughter, is so strong as it is in France; even in the most arid soil, among the avaricious, even among the profligate, it forces itself into flower. Other loves fade away: in the heart of the true Frenchman that parent love blooms to the last.

Valérie felt the presence of that love as a divine protecting guardianship. She sank on her knees and covered his hand with grateful kisses.

"Do not torture yourself, my child, with jealous fears of the fair Italian. Her lot and Alain de Rochebriant's can never unite; and whatever you may think of their whispered converse, Alain's heart at this moment is too filled with anxious troubles to leave one spot in it accessible even to a frivolous gallantry. It is for us to remove these troubles; and then, when he turns his eyes toward you, it will be with the gaze of one who beholds his happiness. You do not weep now, Valérie!"

BOOK NINTH.

CHAPTER I.

On waking some morning, have you ever felt, reader, as if a change for the brighter in the world, without and within you, had suddenly come to pass—some new glory has been given to the sunshine, some fresh balm to the air—you feel younger, and happier, and lighter, in the very beat of your heart—you almost fancy you hear the chime of some spiritual music far off, as if in the deeps of heaven? You are not at first conscious how, or wherefore, this change had been brought about. Is it the effect of a dream in the gone sleep, that has made this morning so different from mornings that have dawned before? And while vaguely asking yourself that question, you become aware that the cause is no mere illusion, that it has its substance in words spoken by living lips, in things that belong to the work-day world.

It was thus that Isaura woke the morning after the conversation with Alain de Rochebriant, and as certain words, then spoken, echoed back on her ear, she knew why she was so happy, why the world was so changed.

In those words she heard the voice of Graham Vane—no! she had not deceived herself—she was loved! she was loved! What mattered that long cold interval of absence? She had not forgotten—she could not believe that absence had brought forgetfulness. There are moments when we insist on judging another's heart by our own. All would be explained some day—all would come right.

How lovely was the face that reflected itself in the glass as she stood before it smoothing back her long hair, murmuring sweet snatches of Italian love-song, and blushing with sweeter love-thoughts as she sang! All that had passed in that year so critical to her outer life—the authorship, the fame, the public career, the popular praise—vanished from her mind as a vapor that rolls from the face of a lake to which the sunlight restores the smile of a brightened heaven.

She was more the girl now than she had ever been since the day on which she sat reading Tasso on the craggy shore of Sorrento.

Singing still as she passed from her chamber, and entering the sitting-room, which fronted the east, and seemed bathed in the sunbeams of deepening May, she took her bird from its cage, and stopped her song to cover it with kisses, which perhaps yearned for vent somewhere.

Later in the day she went out to visit Valérie. Recalling the altered manner of her young friend, her sweet nature became troubled. She divined that Valérie had conceived some jealous pain which she longed to heal; she could not bear the thought of leaving any one that day unhappy. Ignorant before of the girl's feelings towards Alain, she now partly guessed them—one woman who loves in secret is clairvoyante as to such secrets in another.

Valérie received her visitor with a coldness she did not attempt to disguise. Not seeming to notice this, Isaura commenced the conversation with frank mention of Rochebriant. "I have to thank you so much, dear Valérie, for a pleasure you could not anticipate—that of talking about an absent friend, and hearing the praise he deserved from one so capable of appreciating excellence as M. de Rochebriant appears to be."

"You were talking to M. de Rochebriant of an absent friend—ah! you seemed indeed very much interested in the conversation——"

"Do not wonder at that, Valérie; and do not grudge me the happiest moments I have known for months."

"In talking with M. de Rochebriant! No doubt, Mademoiselle Cicogna, you found him very charming."

To her surprise and indignation, Valérie here felt the arm of Isaura tenderly entwining her waist, and her face drawn towards Isaura's sisterly kiss.

"Listen to me, naughty child—listen and believe. M. de Rochebriant can never be charming to me—never touch a chord in my heart or my fancy, except as friend to another, or—kiss me in your turn, Valérie—as suitor to yourself."

Valérie here drew back her pretty childlike head, gazed keenly a moment into Isaura's eyes, felt convinced by the limpid candor of their unmistakable honesty, and flinging herself on her friends bosom, kissed her passionately, and burst into tears.

The complete reconciliation between the two girls was thus peacefully effected; and then Isaura had to listen, at no small length, to the confidences poured into her ears by Valérie, who was fortunately too engrossed by her own hopes and doubts to exact confidences in return. Valérie's was one of those impulsive eager natures that long for a confidante. Not so Isaura's. Only when Valérie had unburthened her heart, and been soothed and caressed into happy trust in the future. did she recall Isaura's explanatory words, and said, archly: "And your absent friend? Tell me about him. Is he as handsome as Alain?'

"Nay," said Isaura, rising to take up the mantle and hat she had laid aside on entering, "they say that the color of a flower is in our vision, not in the leaves." Then with a grave melancholy in the look she fixed upon Valérie, she added: "Rather than distrust of me should occasion you pain, I have pained myself, in making clear to you the reason why I felt interest in M. de Rochebriant's conversation. In turn, I ask of you a favor—do not on this point question me farther. There are some things in our past which influence the present, but to which we dare not assign a future—on which we cannot talk to another. What soothsayer can tell us if the dream of a yesterday will be renewed on the night of a morrow? All is said—we trust one another, dearest."

CHAPTER II.

THAT evening the Morleys looked in at Isaura's on their way to a crowded assembly at the house of one of those rich Americans who were then outvying the English residents at Paris in the good graces of Parisian society. I think the Americans get on better with the French than the English do—I mean the higher class of Americans. They spend more money; their men speak French better; the women are better dressed, and, as a general rule, have read more largely, and converse more frankly.

Mrs. Morley's affection for Isaura had increased during the last few months. As so notable an advocate of the ascendancy of her sex, she felt a sort of grateful pride in the accomplishments and growing renown of so youthful a member of the oppressed sisterhood. But, apart from that sentiment, she had conceived a tender mother-like interest for the girl who stood in the world so utterly devoid of family ties, so destitute of that household guardianship and protection which, with all her assertion of the strength and dignity of woman, and all her opinions as to woman's right of absolute emancipation from the conventions fabricated by the selfishness of man, Mrs. Morley was too sensible not to value for the individual, though she deemed it not needed for the mass. Her great desire was that Isaura should marry well and soon. American women usually marry so young that it seemed to Mrs. Morley an anomaly in social life, that one so gifted in mind and person as Isaura should already have passed the age in which the belles of the great Republic are enthroned as wives and consecrated as mothers.

We have seen that in the past year she had selected from our unworthy but necessary sex, Graham Vane as a suitable spouse to her young friend. She had divined the state of his heart—she had more than suspicions of the state of Isaura's. She was exceedingly perplexed and exceedingly chafed at the Englishman's strange disregard to his happiness and her own projects. She had counted, all this past winter, on his return to Paris; and she became convinced that some misunderstanding, possibly some lover's quarrel was the cause of his protracted absence, and a cause that, if ascertained, could be removed.

A good opportunity now presented itself—Colonel Morley was going to London the next day. He had business there which would detain him at least a week. He would see Graham; and as she considered her husband the shrewdest and wisest person in the world—I mean of the male sex—she had no doubt of his being able to turn Graham's mind thoroughly inside out, and ascertain his exact feelings, views, and intentions. If the Englishman thus assayed, were found of base metal, then, at least, Mrs. Morley would be free to cast him altogether aside, and coin for the uses of the matrimonial market some nobler effigy in purer gold.

"My dear child," said Mrs. Morley, in low voice, nestling herself close to Isaura, while the Colonel, duly instructed, drew off the Venosta, "have you heard anything lately of our pleasant friend Mr. Vane?"

You can guess with what artful design Mrs. Morley put that question point-blank, fixing keen eyes on Isaura while she put it. She saw the heightened color, the quivering lip of the girl thus abruptly appealed to, and she said inly: "I was right—she loves him!"

"I heard of Mr. Vane last night—accidentally."

"Is he coming to Paris soon?"

"Not that I know of. How charmingly that wreath becomes you! it suits the earrings so well, too."

"Frank chose it; he has good taste for a man. I trust him with my commissions to Hunt and Roskell's, but I limit him as to price, he is so extravagant—men are, when they make presents. They seem to think we value things according to their cost. They would gorge us with jewels, and let us starve for want of a smile. Not that Frank is so bad as the rest of them. But *à propos* of Mr. Vane—Frank will be sure to see him, and scold him well for deserting us all. I should not be surprised if he brought the deserter back with him, for I sent a little note by Frank, inviting him to pay us a visit. We have spare rooms in our apartments."

Isaura's heart heaved beneath her robe, but she replied in a tone of astonishing indifference: "I believe this is the height of the London season, and Mr. Vane would probably be too engaged to profit even by an invitation so tempting."

"*Nous verrons.* How pleased he will be to hear of your triumphs! He admired you so much before you were famous: what will be his admiration now! Men are so vain—they care for us so much more when people praise us. But till we have put the creatures in their proper place, we must take them for what they are."

Here the Venosta, with whom the poor Colonel had exhausted all the arts at his command for chaining her attention, could be no longer withheld from approaching Mrs. Morley, and venting her admiration of that lady's wreath, earrings, robes, flounces. This dazzling apparition had on her the effect which a candle has on a moth—she fluttered round it, and longed to absorb herself in its blaze. But the wreath especially fascinated her—a wreath which no prudent lady with colorings less pure, and features less exquisitely delicate than the pretty champion of the rights of woman, could have fancied on her own brows without a shudder. But the Venosta in such matters was not prudent. "It can't be dear," she cried piteously, extending her arms towards Isaura. "I must have one exactly like. Who made it? *Cara signora*, give me the address."

"Ask the Colonel, dear Madame; he chose and brought it," and Mrs. Morley glanced significantly at her well tutored Frank.

"Madame," said the Colonel, speaking in English, which he usually did with the Venosta—who valued herself on knowing that language, and was flattered to be addressed in it—while he amused himself by introducing into its forms the dainty Americanisms with which he puzzled Britisher—he might well puzzle the Florentine,—"Madame, I am too anxious for the appearance of my wife to submit to the test of a rival screamer like yourself in the same apparel. With all the homage due to a sex of which I am enthused dreadful, I decline to designate the florist from whom I purchased Mrs. Morley's head-fixings."

"Wicked man!" cried the Venosta, shaking her finger at him coquettishly. "You are jealous! Fie! a man should never be jealous of a woman's rivalry with woman;" and then, with a cynicism that might have become a greybeard, she added, "but of his own sex every man should be jealous—though of his dearest friend. Isn't it so, *Colonello?*"

The Colonel looked puzzled, bowed, and made no reply.

"That only shows," said Mrs. Morley, rising, "what villians the Colonel has the misfortune to call friends and fellow-men."

"I fear it is time to go," said Frank, glancing at the clock.

In theory the most rebellious, in practice the most obedient, of wives, Mrs. Morley here kissed Isaura, resettled her crinoline, and shaking hands with the Venosta, retreated to the door.

"I shall have the wreath yet," cried the Venosta, impishly. "*La speranza è femmina.*" (Hope is female).

"Alas!" said Isaura, half mournfully, half smiling,—"alas! do you not remember what the poet replied when asked what disease was most mortal?—'the hectic fever caught from the chill of hope.'"

CHAPTER III.

GRAHAM VANE was musing very gloomily in this solitary apartment one morning, when his servant announced Colonel Morley.

He received his visitor with more than the cordiality with which every English politician receives an American citizen. Graham liked the Colonel too well for what he was in himself, to need any national title to his esteem. After some preliminary questions and answers as to the health of Mrs. Morley, the length of the Colonel's stay in London, what day he could dine with Graham at Richmond or Gravesend, the Colonel took up the ball. "We have been reckoning to see you at Paris, sir, for the last six months."

"I am very much flattered to hear that you have thought of me at all; but I am not aware of having warranted the expectation you so kindly express."

"I guess you must have said something to my wife which led her to do more than expect—to reckon on your return. And, by the way, sir, I am charged to deliver to you this note from her, and to back the request it contains that you will avail yourself of the offer. Without summarizing the points I do so."

Graham glanced over the note addressed to him:—

"DEAR MR. VANE,—Do you forget how beautiful the environs of Paris are in May and June? how charming it was last year at the lake of Enghein? how gay were our little dinners out of doors in the garden arbors, with the Savarins and the fair Italian, and her incomparably amusing chaperon? Frank has my orders to bring you back to renew these happy days, while the birds are in their first song, and the leaves are in their youngest green. I have prepared your room *chez nous*—a chamber that looks out on the Champs Elysées, and a quiet *cabinet de travail* at the back, in which you can read, write, or sulk undisturbed. Come, and we will again visit Enghein and Montmorency. Don't talk of engagements. If man proposes, woman disposes. Hesitate not: obey.—Your sincere little friend,

"LIZZIE."

"My dear Morley," said Graham, with emotion, "I cannot find words to thank your wife sufficiently for an invitation so graciously conveyed. Alas! I cannot accept it."

"Why?" asked the Colonel, drily.

"I have too much to do in London."

"Is that the true reason, or am I to suspicion there is anything, sir, which makes you dislike a visit to Paris?"

The Americans enjoy the reputation of being the frankest putters of questions whom liberty of speech has yet educated into *la recherche de la vérité*, and certainly Colonel Morley in this instance did not impair the national reputation.

Graham Vane's brow slightly contracted, and he bit his lip as if stung by a sudden pang; but after a moment's pause, he answered with a good-humored smile—

"No man who has taste enough to admire the most beautiful city, and appreciate the charms of the most brilliant society in the world, can dislike Paris."

"My dear sir, I did not ask if you disliked Paris, but if there were anything that made you dislike coming back to it on a visit."

"What a notion! and what a cross-examiner you would have made if you had been called to the bar! Surely, my dear friend, you can understand that when a man has in one place business which he cannot neglect, he may decline going to another place, whatever pleasure it would give him to do so. By the way, there is a great ball at one of the Minister's to-night; you should go there, and I will point out to you all those English notabilities in whom Americans naturally take interest. I will call for you at eleven o'clock. Lord ——, who is a connection of mine, would be charmed to know you."

Morely hesitated; but when Graham said, "How your wife will scold you if you lose such an opportunity of telling her whether the Duchess of M—— is as beautiful as report says, and whether Gladstone or Disraeli seem to your phrenological science to have the finer head!" the Colonel gave in, and it was settled that Graham should call for him at the Langham Hotel.

That matter arranged, Graham probably hoped that his inquisitive visitor would take leave for the present, but the Colonel evinced no such intention. On the contrary, settling himself more at ease in his arm-chair, he said, "If I remember aright, you do not object to the odor of tobacco?"

Graham rose and presented to his visitor a cigar-box which he took from the mantelpiece.

The Colonel shook his head, and withdrew from his breast-pocket a leather case, from which he extracted a gigantic regalia; this he lighted from a gold match-box in the shape of a locket attached to his watch-chain, and took two or three preliminary puffs with his head thrown back and his eyes meditatively intent upon the ceiling.

We know already that strange whim of the Colonel's (than whom, if he so pleased, no man could speak purer English as spoken by the Britisher) to assert the dignity of the American citizen by copious use of expressions and phrases familiar to the lips of the governing class of the great Republic—delicacies of speech which he would have carefully shunned in the polite circles of the Fifth Avenue in New York. Now the Colonel was much too experienced a man of the world not to be aware that the commission with which his Lizzy had charged him was an exceedingly delicate one; and it occurred to his mother wit that the best way to acquit himself of it, so as to avoid the risk of giving or of receiving serious affront, would be to push that whim of his into more than wonted exaggeration. Thus he could more decidedly and briefly come to the point; and should he, in doing so, appear too meddlesome, rather provoke a laugh than a frown—retiring from the ground with the honors due to a humorist. Accordingly, in his deepest nasal intonation, and withdrawing his eyes from the ceiling he began—

"You have not asked, sir, after the Signorina, or, as we popularly call her, Mademoiselle Cicogna?"

"Have I not? I hope she is quite well, and her lively companion, Signora Venosta."

"They are not sick, sir; or at least were not so last night when my wife and I had the pleasure to see them. Of course you have read Mademoiselle Cicogna's book—a bright performance, sir, age considered."

"Certainly, I have read the book; it is full of unquestionable genius. Is Mademoiselle writing another? But of course she is."

"I am not aware of the fact, sir. It may be predicated; such a mind cannot remain inactive; and I know from Mr. Savarin and that rising young man Gustave Rameau, that the publishers bid high for her brains considerable. Two translations have already appeared in our country. Her fame, sir, will be world-wide. She may be another Georges Sand, or at least another Eulalie Grantmesnil."

Graham's cheek became as white as the paper I write on. He inclined his head as in assent, but without a word. The Colonel continued—

"We ought to be very proud of her acquaintance, sir. I think you detected her gifts while they were yet unconjectured. My wife says so. You must be gratified to remember that, sir—clear grit, sir, and no mistake."

"I certainly more than once have said to Mrs. Morley that I esteemed Mademoiselle's powers so highly that I hoped she would never become a stage-singer and actress. But this M. Rameau? You say he is a rising man. It struck me when at Paris that he was one of those charlatans, with a great deal of conceit and very little information, who are always found in scores on the ultra-Liberal side of politics; possibly I was mistaken."

"He is the responsible editor of '*Le Sens Commun*,' in which talented periodical Mademoiselle Cicogna's book was first raised."

"Of course, I know that; a journal which, so far as I have looked into its political or social articles, certainly written by a cleverer and an older man than M. Rameau, is for unsettling all things and settling nothing. We have writers of that kind among ourselves—I have no sympathy with them. To me it seems that when a man says, 'Off with your head,' he ought to let us know what other head he would put on our shoulders, and by

what process the change of heads shall be effected. Honestly speaking, if you and your charming wife are intimate friends and admirers of Mademoiselle Cicogna, I think you could not do her a greater service than that of detaching her from all connection with men like M. Rameau, and journals like '*Le Sens Commun.*'"

The Colonel here withdrew his cigar from his lips, lowered his head to a level with Graham's, and relaxing into an arch significant smile, said, "Start to Paris, and dissuade her yourself. Start—go ahead—don't be shy—don't seesaw on the beam of speculation. You will have more influence with that young female than we can boast."

Never was England in greater danger of quarrel with America than at that moment; but Graham curbed his wrathful impulse, and replied coldly—

"It seems to me, Colonel, that you, though very unconsciously, derogate from the respect due to Mademoiselle Cicogna. That the counsel of a married couple like yourself and Mrs. Morley should be freely given to and duly heeded by a girl deprived of her natural advisers in parents, is a reasonable and honorable supposition; but to imply that the most influential adviser of a young lady so situated is a young single man, no way related to her, appears to me a dereliction of that regard to the dignity of her sex which is the chivalrous characteristic of your countrymen—and to Mademoiselle Cicogna herself, a surmise which she would be justified in resenting as an impertinence."

"I deny both allegations," replied the Colonel, serenely. "I maintain that a single man whips all connubial creation when it comes to gallantizing a single young woman; and that no young lady would be justified in resenting as impertinence my friendly suggestion to the single man so deserving of her consideration as I estimate you to be, to solicit the right to advise her for life. And that's a caution."

Here the Colonel resumed his regalia, and again gazed intent on the ceiling.

"Advise her for life! You mean, I presume, as a candidate for her hand."

"You don't Turkey now. Well, I guess, you are not wide of the mark there, sir."

"You do me infinite honor, but I do not presume so far."

"So, so—not as yet. Before a man who is not without gumption runs himself for Congress, he likes to calculate how the votes will run. Well, sir, suppose we are in caucus, and let us discuss the chances of the election with closed doors."

Graham could not help smiling at the persistent officiousness of his visitor, but his smile was a very sad one.

"Pray change the subject, my dear Colonel Morley—it is not a pleasant one to me; and as regards Mademoiselle Cicogna, can you think it would not shock her to suppose that her name was dragged into the discussions you would provoke, even with closed doors?"

"Sir," replied the Colonel, imperturbably, "since the doors are closed, there is no one, unless it be a spirit-listener under the table, who can wire to Mademoiselle Cicogna the substance of debate. And, for my part, I do not believe in spiritual manifestations. Fact is, that I have the most amicable sentiments towards both parties, and if there is a misunderstanding which is opposed to the union of the States, I wish to remove it while yet in time. Now, let us suppose that you decline to be a candidate; there are plenty of others who will run; and as an elector must choose one representative or other, so a gal must choose one husband or other. And then you only repent when it is too late. It is a great thing to be first in the field. Let us approximate to the point; the chances seem good—will you run?—Yes or no?"

"I repeat, Colonel Morley, that I entertain no such presumption."

The Colonel here, rising, extended his hand, which Graham shook with constrained cordiality, and then leisurely walked to the door; there he paused, as if struck by a new thought, and said gravely, in his natural tone of voice, "You have nothing to say, sir, against the young lady's character and honor?"

"I!—heavens, no! Colonel Morley, such a question insults me."

The Colonel resumed his deepest nasal bass: "It is only, then, because you don't fancy her now so much as you did last year—fact, you are soured on her and fly off the handle. Such things do happen. The same thing has happened to myself, sir. In my days of celibacy, there was a gal at Saratoga, whom I gallantized and whom, while I was at Saratoga, I

thought Heaven had made to be Mrs. Morley. I was on the very point of telling her so, when I was suddenly called off to Philadelphia; and at Philadelphia, sir, I found that Heaven had made another Mrs. Morley. I state this fact, sir, though I seldom talk of my own affairs, even when willing to tender my advice in the affairs of another, in order to prove that I do not intend to censure you if Heaven has served you in the same manner. Sir, a man may go blind for one gal when he is not yet dry behind the ears, and then, when his eyes are skinned, go in for one better. All things mortal meet with a change, as my sister's little boy said when, at the age of eight, he quitted the Methodys and turned Shaker. Threep and argue as we may, you and I are both mortals —more's the pity. Good morning, sir (glancing at the clock, which proclaimed the hour of 3 P.M.),—I err—good evening."

By the post that day the Colonel transmitted a condensed and laconic report of his conversation with Graham Vane. I can state its substance in yet fewer words. He wrote word that Graham positlvely declined the invitation to Paris; that he had then, agreeably to Lizzy's instructions, ventilated the Englishman, in the most delicate terms, as to his intentions with regard to Isaura, and that no intentions at all existed. The sooner all thoughts, of him were relinquished, and a new suitor on the ground, the better it would be for the young lady's happiness in the only state in which happiness should be, if not found, at least sought, whether by maid or man.

Mrs. Morley was extremely put out by this untoward result of the diplomacy she had intrusted to the Colonel; and when, the next day, came a very courteous letter from Graham, thanking her gratefully for the kindness of her invitation, and expressing his regret briefly, though cordially, at his inability to profit by it, without the most distant allusion to the subject which the Colonel had brought on the *tapis*, or even requesting his compliments to the Signoras Venosta and Cicogna, she was more than put out, more than resentful—she was deeply grieved. Being, however, one of those gallant heroes of womankind who do not give in at the first defeat, she began to doubt whether Frank had not rather overstrained the delicacy which he said he had put into his "soundings." He ought to have been more explicit. Meanwhile she resolved to call on Isaura, and, without mentioning Graham's refusal of her invitation, endeavor to ascertain whether the attachment which she felt persuaded the girl secretly cherished for this recalcitrant Englishman were something more than the first romantic fancy—whether it were sufficiently deep to justify farther effort on Mrs. Morley's part to bring it to a prosperous issue.

She found Isaura at home and alone; and, to do her justice, she exhibited wonderful tact in the fulfilment of the task she had set herself. Forming her judgment by manner and look—not words—she returned home, convinced that she ought to seize the opportunity afforded to her by Graham's letter. It was one to which she might very naturally reply, and in that reply she might convey the object at her heart more felicitously than the Colonel had done. "The cleverest man is," she said to herself, "stupid compared to an ordinary woman in the real business of life, which does not consist of fighting and money-making,"

Now there was one point she had ascertained by words in her visit to Isaura—a point on which all might depend. She had asked Isaura when and where she had seen Graham last; and when Isaura had given her that information, and she learned it was on the eventful day on which Isaura gave her consent to the publication of her MS. if approved by Savarin, in the journal to be set up by the handsome-faced young author, she leapt to the conclusion that Graham had been seized with no unnatural jealousy, and was still under the illusive glamory of that green-eyed fiend. She was confirmed in this notion, not altogether an unsound one, when asking with apparent carlessness—"And in that last interview, did you see any change in Mr. Vane's manner, especially when he took leave?"

Isaura turned away pale, and involuntarily clasping her hands—as women do when they would suppress pain—replied, in a low murmur, "His manner was changed."

Accordingly, Mrs. Morley sat down and wrote the following letter:—

"DEAR MR. VANE,—I am very angry indeed with you for refusing my invitation,—I had so counted on you, and I dont believe a word of your excuse. Engagements! To balls and dinners, I suppose, as if you were not much too clever to care about these silly at-

tempts to enjoy solitude in crowds. And as to what you men call business, you have no right to have any business at all. You are not in commerce; you are not in Parliament; you told me yourself that you had no great landed estates to give you trouble; you are rich, without any necessity to take pains to remain rich, or to become richer; you have no business in the world except to please yourself: and when you will not come to Paris to see one of your truest friends—which I certainly am—it simply means, that no matter how such a visit would please me, it does not please yourself. I call that abominably rude and ungrateful.

"But I am not writing merely to scold you. I have something else on my mind, and it must come out. Certainly, when you were at Paris last year you did admire, above all other young ladies, Isaura Cicogna. And I honored you for doing so. I know no young lady to be called her equal. Well, if you admired her then, what would you do now if you met her? Then she was but a girl—very brilliant, very charming, it is true—but undeveloped, untested. Now she is a woman, a princess among women, but retaining all that is most lovable in a girl; so courted, yet so simple—so gifted, yet so innocent. Her head is not a bit turned by all the flattery that surrounds her. Come and judge for yourself. I still hold the door of the rooms destined to you open for repentance.

"My dear Mr. Vane, do not think me a silly match-making little woman, when I write to you thus, *a cœur ouvert*.

"I like you so much that I would fain secure to you the rarest prize which life is ever likely to offer to your ambition. Where can you hope to find another Isaura? Among the stateliest daughters of your English dukes, where is there one whom a proud man would be more proud to show to the world, saying, 'She is mine!' where one more distinguished—I will not say by mere beauty, there she might be eclipsed—but by sweetness and dignity combined—in aspect, manner, every movement, every smile?

"And you, who are yourself so clever so well read—you who would be so lonely with a wife who was not your companion, with whom you could not converse on equal terms of intellect,—my dear friend, where could you find a companion in whom you would not miss the poet-soul of Isaura? Of course I should not dare to obtrude all these questionings on your innermost reflections, if I had not some idea, right or wrong, that since the days when at Enghein and Montmorency, seeing you and Isaura side by side, I whispered to Frank, 'So should those two be through life,' some cloud has passed between your eyes and the future on which they gazed. Cannot that cloud be dispelled? Were you so unjust to yourself as to be jealous of a rival, perhaps of a Gustave Rameau? I write to you frankly—answer me frankly; and if you answer, —'Mrs. Morley, I don't know what you mean; I admired Mademoiselle Cicogna as I might admire any other pretty accomplished girl, but it is really nothing to me whether she marries Gustave Rameau or any one else,'—why, then, burn this letter—forget that it has been written; and may you never know the pang of remorseful sigh, if, in the days to come, you see her—whose name in that case I should profane did I repeat it—the comrade of another man's mind, the half of another man's heart, the pride and delight of another man's blissful home."

CHAPTER IV.

THERE is somewhere in Lord Lytton's writings—writings so numerous that I may be pardoned if I cannot remember where—a critical definition of the difference between dramatic and narrative art of story, instanced by that marvellous passage in the loftiest of Sir Walter Scott's works, in which all the anguish of Ravenswood on the night before he has to meet Lucy's brother in mortal combat is conveyed without the spoken words required in tragedy. It is only to be conjectured by the tramp of his heavy boots to and fro all the night long in his solitary chamber, heard below by the faithful Caleb. The drama could not have allowed that treatment; the drama must have put into words as "soliloquy,' agonies which the non-dramatic narrator knows that no soliloquy can describe. Humbly do I imitate, then, the great master of narrative in declining to put into words the conflict between love and reason that tortured the heart of Graham Vane when dropping noiselessly the letter I have just transcribed. He covered his face with his hands and remained—I know not how long—in the same position, his head bowed, not a sound escaping from his lips.

He did not stir from his rooms that day; and had their been a Caleb's faithful ear to listen, his tread, too, might have been heard all that sleepless night passing to and fro, but pausing oft, along his solitary floors.

Possibly love would have borne down all opposing reasonings, doubts, and prejudices, but for incidents that occurred the following evening. On that evening Graham dined *en famille* with his cousins the Altons. After dinner, the Duke produced the design for a cenotaph inscribed to the memory of his aunt, Lady Janet King, which he proposed to place in the family chapel at Alton.

"I know," said the Duke, kindly, "you would wish the old house from which she sprang to preserve some such record of her who loved you as her son; and even putting you out of the question, it gratifies me to attest the claim of our family to a daughter who continues to be famous for her goodness, and made the goodness so lovable that envy forgave it for being famous. It was a pang to me when poor Richard King decided on placing her

tomb among strangers; but in conceding his rights as to her resting-place, I retain mine to her name, "*Nostris liberis virtutis exemplar.*"

Graham wrung his cousin's hand—he could not speak, choked by suppressed tears.

The Duchess, who loved and honored Lady Janet almost as much as did her husband, fairly sobbed aloud. She had, indeed, reason for grateful memories of the deceased: there had been some obstacles to her marriage with the man who had won her heart, arising from political differences and family feuds between their parents, which the gentle mediation of Lady Janet had smoothed away. And never did union founded on mutual and ardent love more belie the assertions of the great Bichat (esteemed by Dr. Buckle the finest intellect which practical philosophy has exhibited since Aristotle), that "Love is a sort of fever which does not last beyond two years," than that between these eccentric specimens of a class denounced as frivolous and heartless by philosophers, English and French, who have certainly never heard of Bichat.

When the emotion the Duke had exhibited was calmed down, his wife pushed towards Graham a sheet of paper, inscribed with the epitaph composed by his hand. "Is it not beautiful," she said, falteringly—"not a word too much nor too little?"

Graham read the inscription slowly, and with very dimmed eyes. It deserved the praise bestowed on it; for the Duke, though a shy and awkward speaker, was an incisive and graceful writer.

Yet, in his innermost self, Graham shivered when he read that epitaph, it expressed so emphatically the reverential nature of the love which Lady Janet had inspired—the genial influences which the holiness of a character so active in doing good had diffused around it. It brought vividly before Graham that image of perfect spotless womanhood. And a voice within him asked, "Would that cenotaph be placed amid the monuments of an illustrious lineage if the secret known to thee could transpire? What though the lost one were really as unsullied by sin as the world deems, would the name now treasured as an heirloom not be a memory of gall and a sound of shame?"

He remained so silent after putting down the inscription, that the Duke said modestly, "My dear Graham, I see that you do not like what I have written. Your pen is much more practised than mine. If I did not ask you to compose the epitaph, it was because I thought it would please you more in coming, as a spontaneous tribute due to her, from the representative of her family. But will you correct my sketch, or give me another according to your own ideas?"

"I see not a word to alter," said Graham: "forgive me if my silence wronged my emotion; the truest eloquence is that which holds us too mute for applause."

"I knew you would like it. Leopold is always so disposed to underrate himself," said the Duchess, whose hand was resting fondly on her husband's shoulder. "Epitaphs are so difficult to write—especially epitaphs on women of whom in life the least said the better. Janet was the only woman I ever knew whom one could praise in safety."

"Well expressed," said the Duke, smiling: "and I wish you would make that safety clear to some lady friends of yours, to whom it might serve as a lesson. Proof against every breath of scandal herself, Janet King never uttered and never encouraged one ill-natured word against another. But I am afraid, my dear fellow, that I must leave you to a *tête-à-tête* with Eleanor. You know that I must be at the House this evening—I only paired till half-past nine."

"I will walk down to the House with you, if you are going on foot."

"No," said the Duchess; "you must resign yourself to me for at least half an hour. I was looking over your aunt's letters to-day, and I found one which I wish to show you; it is all about yourself, and written within the last few months of her life." Here she put her arm into Graham's, and led him into her own private drawing-room, which, though others might call it a boudoir, she dignified by the name of her study. The Duke remained for some minutes thoughtfully leaning his arm on the mantle-piece. It was no unimportant debate in the Lords that night, and on a subject in which he took great interest, and the details of which he had thoroughly mastered. He had been requested to speak, if only a few words, for his high character and his reputation for good sense gave weight to the mere utterance of his opinion. But though no one

had more moral courage in action, the Duke had a terror at the very thought of addressing an audience, which made him despise himself.

"Ah!" he muttered, "if Graham Vane were but in Parliament, I could trust him to say exactly what I would rather be swallowed up by an earthquake than stand up and say for myself. But now he has got money he seems to think of nothing but saving it."

CHAPTER V.

THE letter from Lady Janet, which the Duchess took from the desk and placed in Graham's hand, was in strange coincidence with the subject that for the last twenty-four hours had absorbed his thoughts and tortured his heart. Speaking of him in terms of affectionate eulogy, the writer proceeded to confide her earnest wish that he should not longer delay that change in life which, concentrating so much that is vague in the desires and aspirations of man, leaves his heart and his mind, made serene by the contentment of home free for the steadfast consolidation of their warmth and their light upon the ennobling duties that unite the individual to his race.

"There is no one," wrote Lady Janet, "whose character and career a felicitious choice in marriage can have greater influence over than this dear adopted son of mine. I do not fear that in any case he will be liable to the errors of his brilliant father. His early reverse of fortune here seems to me one of those blessings which Heaven conceals in the form of a affliction. For in youth, the genial freshness of his gay animal spirits, a native generosity mingled with desire of display and thirst for applause, made me somewhat alrarmed for his future. But, though he still retains those attributes of character, they are no longer predominant; they are modified and chastened. He has learned prudence. But what I now fear most for him is that which he does not show in the world, which neither Leopold nor you seem to detect,—it is an exceeding sensitiveness of pride. I know not how else to describe it. It is so interwoven with the highest qualities, that I sometimes dread injury to them could it be torn away from the faultier ones which it supports.

"It is interwoven with that lofty independence of spirit which has made him refuse openings the most alluring to his ambition; it communicates a touching grandeur to his self-denying thrift; it makes him so tenacious of his word once given, so cautious before he gives it. Public life to him is essential; without it he would be incomplete; and yet I sigh to think that whatever success he may achieve in it will be attended with proportionate pain. Calumny goes side by side with fame, and courting fame as a man, he is as thin-skinned to calumny as a woman.

"The wife for Graham should have qualities not taken individually, uncommon in English wives, but in combination somewhat rare.

"She must have mind enough to appreciate his—not to clash with it. She must be fitted with sympathies to be his dearest companion, his confidante in the hopes and fears which the slightest want of sympathy would make him keep ever afterwards pent within his breast. In herself worthy of distinction, she must merge all distinction in his. You have met in the world men who, marrying professed beauties, or professed literary geniuses, are spoken of as the husband of the beautiful Mrs. A——, or of the clever Mrs. B——: can you fancy Graham Vane in the reflected light of one of those husbands? I trembled last year when I thought he was attracted by a face which the artists raved about, and again by a tongue which dropped *bons mots* that went the round of the clubs. I was relieved when, sounding him, he said, laughingly, 'No, dear aunt, I should be one sore from head to foot if I married a wife that was talked about for anything but goodness.'

"No—Graham Vane will have pains sharp enough if he live to be talked about himself. But that tenderest half of himself, the bearer of the name he would make, and for the dignity of which he alone would be responsible,—if that were the town talk, he would curse the hour he gave any one the right to take on herself his man's burden of calumny and fame. I know not which I should pity the most, Graham Vane or his wife.

"Do you understand me, dearest Eleanor? No doubt that you do so far, that you comprehend that the women whom men most admire are not the women we, as women ourselves, would wish our sons or brothers to

marry. But perhaps you do not comprehend my cause of fear, which is this—for in such matters men do not see as we women do—Graham abhors, in the girls of our time, frivolity and insipidity. Very rightly, you will say. True, but then he is too likely to be allured by contrasts. I have seen him attracted by the very girls we recoil from more than we do from those we allow to be frivolous and insipid. I accused him of admiration for a certain young lady whom you call 'odious,' and whom the slang that has come into vogue calls 'fast;' and I was not satisfied with his answer—'Certainly I admired her; she is not a doll—she has ideas.' I would rather of the two see Graham married to what men call a doll, than to a girl with ideas which are distasteful to women."

Lady Janet then went on to question the Duchess about a Miss Asterisk, with whom this tale will have nothing to do, but who, from the little which Lady Janet had seen of her, might possess all the requisites that fastidious correspondent would exact for the wife of her adopted son.

This Miss Asterisk had been introduced into the London world by the Duchess. The Duchess had replied to Lady Janet, that if earth could be ransacked, a more suitable wife for Graham Vane than Miss Asterisk could not be found; she was well born—an heiress; the estates she inherited were in the county of —— (viz., the county in which the ancestors of D'Altons and Vanes had for centuries established their whereabout). Miss Asterisk was pretty enough to please any man's eye, but not with the beauty of which artists rave; well informed enough to be companion to a well-informed man, but certainly not witty enough to supply *bons mots* to the clubs. Miss Asterisk was one of those women of whom a husband might be proud, yet with whom a husband would feel safe from being talked about.

And in submitting the letter we have read to Graham's eye, the Duchess had the cause of Miss Asterisk pointedly in view. Miss Asterisk had confided to her friend, that, of all men she had seen, Mr. Graham Vane was the one she would feel the least inclined to refuse.

So when Granam Vane returned the letter to the Duchess, simply saying, "How well my dear aunt divined what is weakest in me!" the Duchesse replied quickly, "Miss Asterisk dines here to-morrow; pray come; you would like her if you knew more of her."

"To-morrow I am engaged—an American friend of mine dines with me; but 'tis no matter, for I shall never feel more for Miss Asterisk than I feel for Mont Blanc."

CHAPTER VI.

On leaving his cousin's house Graham walked on, he scarce knew or cared whither, the image of the beloved dead so forcibly recalled the solemnity of the mission with which he had been intrusted, and which hitherto he had failed to fulfil. What if the only mode by which he could, without causing questions and suspicions that might result in dragging to day the terrible nature of the trust he held, enrich the daughter of Richard King, repair all wrong hitherto done to her, and guard the sanctity of Lady Janet's home,—should be in that union which Richard King had commended to him while his heart was yet free?

In such a case, would not gratitude to the dead, duty to the living, make that union imperative at whatever sacrifice of happiness to himself? The two years to which Richard King had limited the suspense of research were not yet expired. Then, too, that letter of Lady Janet's, —so tenderly anxious for his future, so clear-sighted as to the elements of his own character in its strength or its infirmities—combined with graver causes to withhold his heart from its yearning impulse, and—no, not steel it against Isaura, but forbid it to realize, in the fair creature and creator of romance, his ideal of the woman to whom an earnest, sagacious, aspiring man commits all the destinies involved in the serene dignity of his hearth. He could not but own that this gifted author—this eager seeker after fame—this brilliant and bold competitor with men on their own stormy battle-ground—was the very person from whom Lady Janet would have warned away his choice. She (Isaura) merge her own distinctions in a husband's!—she leave exclusively to him the burden of fame and calumny!—she shun "to be talked about!"—she who could feel her life to be a success or

a failure, according to the extent and the loudness of the talk which it courted!

While these thoughts racked his mind, a kindly hand was laid on his arm, and a cherry voice accosted him. "Well met, my dear Vane! I see we are bound to the same place; there will be a good gathering to-night."

"What do you mean, Bevil? I am going nowhere, except to my own quiet rooms."

"Pooh! come in here at least for a few minutes,"—and Bevil drew him up to the door-step of a house close by, where, on certain evenings, a well-known club drew together men who seldom met so familiarly elsewhere—men of all callings; a club especially favored by wits, authors, and the *flâneurs* of polite society.

Graham shook his head, about to refuse, when Bevil added, "I have just come from Paris, and can give you the last news, literary, political, and social. By the way, I saw Savarin the other night at the Cicogna's—he introduced me there." Graham winced; he was spelled by the music of a name, and followed his acquaintance into the crowded room, and after returning many greetings and nods, withdrew into a remote corner, and motioned Bevil to a seat beside him.

"So you met Savarin? Where, did you say?"

"At the house of the new lady-author—I hate the word authoress—Mademoiselle Cicogna! Of course you have read her book?"

"Yes."

"Full of fine things, is it not?—though somewhat high-flown and sentimental; however, nothing succeeds like success. No book has been more talked about at Paris; the only thing more talked about is the lady-author herself."

"Indeed, and how?"

"She doesn't look twenty, a mere girl—of that kind of beauty which so arrests the eye that you pass by other faces to gaze on it, and the dullest stranger would ask, 'Who and what is she?' A girl, I say, like that—who lives as independently as if she were a middle-aged widow, receives every week (she has her Thursdays), with no other chaperon than an old *ci-devant* Italian singing woman, dressed like a guy—must set Parisian tongues into play, even if she had not written the crack book of the season."

"Mademoiselle Cicogna receives on Thursdays,—no harm in that; and if she have no other chaperon than the Italian lady you mention, it is because Mademoiselle Cicogna is an orphan, and having a fortune, such as it is, of her own, I do not see why she should not live as independently as many an unmarried woman in London placed under similar circumstances. I suppose she receives chiefly persons in the literary or artistic world, and if they are all as respectable as the Savarins, I do not think ill-nature itself could find fault with her social circle."

"Ah! you know the Cicogna, I presume. I am sure I did not wish to say anything that could offend her best friends, only I do think it is a pity she is not married, poor girl!"

"Mademoiselle Cicogna, accomplished, beautiful, of good birth (the Cicognas rank among the oldest of Lombard families), is not likely to want offers."

"Offers of marriage,—h'm—well, I daresay, from authors and artists. You know Paris better even than I do, but I don't suppose authors and artists there make the most desirable husbands; and I scarcely know a marriage in France between a man-author and lady-author which does not end in the deadliest of all animosities—that of wounded *amour propre*. Perhaps the man admires his own genius too much to do proper homage to his wife's."

"But the choice of Mademoiselle Cicogna need not be restricted to the pale of authorship—doubtless she has many admirers beyond that quarrelsome borderland."

"Certainly—countless adorers. Enguerrand de Vandemar—you know that diamond of dandies?"

"Perfectly—is he an admirer?"

"*Cela va sans dire*—he told me that though she was not the handsomest woman in Paris, all other women looked less handsome since he had seen her. But, of course, French lady-killers like Enguerrand, when it comes to marriage, leave it to their parents to choose their wives and arrange the terms of the contract. Talking of lady-killers, I beheld amid the throng at Mademoiselle Cicogna's the *ci-devant* Lovelace whom I remember some twenty-three years ago as the darling of wives and the terror of husbands—Victor de Mauléon."

"Victor de Mauléon at Mademoiselle Cicogna's!—what! is that man restored to society?"

"Ah! you are thinking of the ugly old story about the jewels—oh yes, he has got over that; all his grand relations, the Vandemars, Beauvilliers, Rochebriant, and others, took him by the hand when he re-appeared at Paris last year; and though I believe he is still avoided by many, he is courted by still more—and avoided, I fancy, rather from political than social causes. The Imperialist set, of course, execrate and proscribe him. You know he is the writer of those biting articles signed 'Peirre Firmin' in the '*Sens Commun*'; and I am told he is the proprietor of that very clever journal, which has become a power."

"So, so—that is the journal in which Mademoiselle Cicogna's *roman* first appeared. So, so—Victor de Mauléon one of her associates, her counsellor and friend—ah!"

"No, I didn't say that; on the contrary, he was presented to her for the first time the evening I was at the house. I saw that young silk-haired coxcomb, Gustave Rameau, introduce him to her. You don't perhaps know Rameau, editor of the '*Sens Commun*'—writes poems and criticisms. They say he is a Red Republican, but De Mauléon keeps truculent French politics subdued if not suppressed in his cynical journal. Somebody told me that the Cicogna is very much in love with Rameau; certainly he has a handsome face of his own, and that is the reason why she was so rude to the Russian Prince X——."

"How, rude? Did the Prince propose to her?"

"Propose! you forget — he is married. Don't you know the Princess? Still there are other kinds of proposals than those of marriage which a rich Russian Prince may venture to make to a pretty novelist brought up for the stage."

"Bevil!" cried Graham, grasping the man's arm fiercely, "how dare you?"

"My dear boy," said Bevil, very much astonished, "I really did not know that your interest in the young lady was so great. If I have wounded you in relating a mere *on dit* picked up at the Jockey Club, I beg you a thousand pardons. I dare say there was not a word of truth in it."

"Not a word of truth, you may be sure, if the *on dit* was injurious to Mademoiselle Cicogna. It is true, I *have* a strong interest in her; any man—any gentleman—would have such interest in a girl so brilliant and seemingly so friendless. It shames one of human nature to think that the reward which the world makes to those who elevate its platitudes, brighten its dulness, delight its leisure, is—Slander! I have had the honor to make the acquaintance of this lady before she became a 'celebrity,' and I have never met in my paths through life a purer heart or a nobler nature. What is the wretched *on dit* you condescend to circulate? Permit me to add—

'He who repeats a slander shares the crime.'"

"Upon my honor, my dear Vane," said Bevil seriously (he did not want for spirit), "I hardly know you this evening. It is not because duelling is out of fashion that a man should allow himself to speak in a tone that gives offence to another who intended none; and if duelling is out of fashion in England, it is still possible in France. *Entre nous*, I would rather cross the Channel with you than submit to language that conveys unmerited insult."

Graham's cheek, before ashen pale, flushed into dark red. "I understand you," he said quietly, "and will be at Boulogne to-morrow."

"Graham Vane," replied Bevil, with much dignity, "You and I have known each other a great many years, and neither of us has cause to question the courage of the other; but I am much older than yourself—permit me to take the melancholy advantage of seniority. A duel between us in consequence of careless words said about a lady in no way connected with either, would be a cruel injury to her; a duel on grounds so slight would little injure me—a man about town, who would not sit an hour in the house of Commons if you paid him a thousand pounds a minute. But you, Graham Vane—you whose destiny it is to canvass electors and make laws—would it not be an injury to you to be questioned at the hustings why you broke the law, and why you sought another man's life? Come, come! shake hands and consider all that seconds, if we chose them, would exact, is said, every affront on either side retracted, every apology on either side made."

"Bevil, you disarm and conquer me, I spoke like a hot-headed fool; forget it—forgive. But—but—I can listen calmly now—what is that *on dit*?"

"One that thoroughly bears out your own very manly upholding of the poor young orphan, whose name I shall never again mention without such respect as would satisfy her most sensitive champion. It was said that the Prince X——boasted that before a week was out Mademoiselle Cicogna should appear in his carriage at the Bois de Boulogne, and wear at the opera diamonds he had sent to her; that his boast was enforced by a wager, and the terms of the wager compelled the Prince to confess the means he had taken to succeed, and produce the evidence that he had lost or won. According to this *on dit*, the Prince had written to Mademoiselle Cicogna, and the letter had been accompanied by a *parure* that cost him half a million of francs; that the diamonds had been sent back, with a few words of such scorn as a queen might address to an upstart lackey. But, my dear Vane, it is a mournful position for a girl to receive such offers; and you must agree with me in wishing she were safely married, even to Monsier Rameau, coxcomb though he be. Let us hope that they will be an exception to French authors, male and female, in general, and live like turtle-doves."

CHAPTER VII.

A FEW days after the date of the last chapter, Colonel Morley returned to Paris. He had dined with Graham at Greenwich, had met him afterwards in society, and paid him a farewell visit on the day before the Colonel's departure; but the name of Isaura Cicogna had not again been uttered by either. Morley was surprised that his wife did not question him minutely as to the mode in which he had executed her delicate commission, and the manner as well as words with which Graham had replied to his "ventilations." But his Lizzy cut him short when he began his recital—

"I don't want to hear anything more about the man. He has thrown away a prize richer than his ambition will ever gain, even if it gained him a throne."

"That it can't gain him in the old country. The people are loyal to the present dynasty, whatever you may be told to the contrary."

"Don't be so horribly literal, Frank; that subject is done with. How was the Duchess of M—— dressed?"

But when the Colonel had retired to what the French call the *cabinet de travail*—and which he more accurately termed his "smoke den"—and there indulged in the cigar which, despite his American citizenship, was forbidden in the drawing-room of the tyrant who ruled his life, Mrs. Morley took from her desk a letter received three days before, and brooded over it intently, studying every word. When she had thus reperused it, her tears fell upon her page. "Poor Isaura!" she muttered —"Poor Isaura! I know she loves him—and how deeply a nature like hers can love! But I must break it to her. If I did not, she would remain nursing a vain dream, and refuse every chance of real happiness for the sake of nursing it." Then she mechanically folded up the letter—I need not say it was from Graham Vane—restored it to the desk, and remained musing till the Colonel looked in at the door and said peremptorily, "Very late—come to bed."

The next day Madame Savaran called on Isaura.

"*Chère enfant*," said she," "I have bad news for you. Poor Gustave is very ill—an attack of the lungs and fever; you know how delicate he is."

"I am sincerely grieved," said Isaura, in earnest tender tones; "it must be a very sudden attack: he was here last Thursday."

"The malady only declared itself yesterday morning, but surely you must have observed how ill he has been looking for several days past. It pained me to see him."

"I did not notice any change in him," said Isaura, somewhat conscience-stricken. Wrapt in her own happy thoughts, she would not have noticed change in faces yet more familiar to her than that of her young admirer.

"Isaura," said Madame Savarin, "I suspect there are moral causes for our friend's failing health. Why should I disguise my meaning? You know well how madly he is in love with you, and have you denied him hope?"

"I like M. Rameau as a friend; I admire him—at times I pity him."

"Pity is akin to love."

"I doubt the truth of that saying, at all events as you apply it now. I could not love

M. Rameau; I never gave him cause to think I could."

"I wish for both your sakes that you could make me a different answer; for his sake, because, knowing his faults and failings, I am persuaded that they would vanish in a companionship so pure, so elevating as yours: you could make him not only so much happier but so much better a man. Hush! let me go on, let me come to yourself,—I say for your sake I wish it. Your pursuits, your ambition, are akin to his; you should not marry one who could not sympathize with you in these. If you did, he might either restrict the exercise of your genius or be chafed at its display. The only authoress I ever knew whose married lot was serenely happy to the last, was the greatest of English poetesses married to a great English poet. You cannot, you ought not, to devote yourself to the splendid career to which your genius irresistibly impels you, without that counsel, that support, that protection, which a husband alone can give. My dear child, as the wife myself of a man of letters, and familiarized to all the gossip, all the scandal, to which they who give their names to the public are exposed, I declare that if I had a daughter who inherited Savarin's talents, and was ambitious of attaining to his renown, I would rather shut her up in a convent than let her publish a book that was in every one's hands until she had sheltered her name under that of a husband; and if I say this of my child with a father so wise in the world's ways, and so popularly respected as my *bon homme*, what must I feel to be essential to your safety, poor stranger in our land! poor solitary orphan! with no other advice or guardian that the singing mistress whom you touchingly call "*Madre!*" I see how I distress and pain you—I cannot help it. Listen: The other evening Savarin came back from his favorite *café* in a state of excitement that made me think he came to announce a revolution. It was about you; he stormed, he wept—actually wept—my philosophical laughing, Savarin. He had just heard of that atrocious wager made by a Russian barbarian. Every one praised you for the contempt with which you had treated the savage's insolence. But that *you* should have been submitted to such an insult without one male friend who had the right to resent and chastise it,—you cannot think how Savarin was chaffed and galled. You know how he admires, but you cannot guess how he reveres you; and since then he says to me every day: 'That girl must not remain single. Better marry any man who has a heart to defend a wife's honor and the nerve to fire a pistol: every Frenchman has those qualifications!'"

Here Isaura could no longer restrain her emotions, she burst into sobs so vehement, so convulsive, that Madame Savarin became alarmed; but when she attempted to embrace and soothe her, Isaura recoiled with a visible shudder, and gasping out, "Cruel, cruel!" turned to the door, and rushed to her own room.

A few minutes afterwards a maid entered the *salon* with a message to Madame Savarin that Mademoiselle was so unwell that she must beg Madame to excuse her return to the *salon*.

Later in the day Mrs. Morley called, but Isaura would not see her.

Meanwhile poor Rameau was stretched on his sick-bed, and in sharp struggle between life and death. It is difficult to disentangle, one by one, all the threads in a nature so complex as Rameau's; but if we may hazard a conjecture, the grief of disappointed love was not the immediate cause of his illness, and yet it had much to do with it. The goad of Isaura's refusal had driven him into seeking distraction in excesses which a stronger frame could not have courted with impunity. The man was thoroughly Parisian in many things, but especially in impatience of any trouble. Did love trouble him—love could be drowned in absinthe; and too much absinthe may be a more immediate cause of congested lungs than the love which the absinthe had lulled to sleep.

His bedside was not watched by hirelings. When first taken thus ill—too ill to attend to his editorial duties—information was conveyed to the publisher of the "*Sens Commun*," and in consequence of that information, Victor de Mauléon came to see the sick man. By his bed he found Savarin, who had called, as it were by chance, and seen the doctor, who had said, "It is grave. He must be well nursed."

Savarin whispered to de Mauléon, "shall we call in a professional nurse, or a *sœur de charité?*"

De Mauléon replied also in a whisper, "Somebody told me that man had a mother."

It was true — Savarin had forgotten it. Rameau never mentioned his parents—he was not proud of them.

They belonged to a lower class of the *bourgeoisie*, retired shopkeepers, and a Red Republican is sworn to hate of the *bourgeoisie*, high or low; while a beautiful young author pushing his way into the Chaussée d'Antin does not proclaim to the world that his parents had sold hosiery in the Rue St. Denis.

Nevertheless, Savarin knew that Rameau had such parents still living, and took the hint. Two hours afterwards Rameau was leaning his burning forehead on his mother's breast.

The next morning the doctor said to the mother, "You are worth ten of me. If you can stay here we shall pull him through."

"Stay here!—my own boy!" cried indignantly the poor mother.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE day which had inflicted on Isaura so keen an anguish, was marked by a great trial in the life of Alain de Rochebriant.

In the morning he received the notice "of *un commandement tendant à saisie immobilière*," on the part of his creditor, M. Louvier; in plain English, an announcement that his property at Rochebriant would be put up to public sale on a certain day, in case all debts due to the mortgagee were not paid before. An hour afterwards came a note from Duplessis stating that "he had returned from Bretagne on the previous evening, and would be very happy to see the Marquis de Rochebriant before two o'clock, if not inconvenient to call."

Alain put the "*commandement*" into his pocket, and repaired to the Hotel Duplessis.

The financier received him with very cordial civility. Then he began, "I am happy to say I left your excellent aunt in very good health. She honored the letter of introduction to her which I owe to your politeness with the most amiable hospitalities; she insisted on my removing from the *auberge* at which I first put up and becoming a guest under your venerable roof-tree—a most agreeable lady, and a most interesting *château*."

"I fear your accommodation was in striking contrast to your comforts at Paris; my *château* is only interesting to an antiquarian enamored of ruins."

"Pardon me, 'ruins' is an exaggerated expression. I do not say that the *château* does not want some repairs, but they would not be costly; the outer walls are strong enough to defy time for centuries to come, and a few internal decorations and some modern additions of furniture would make the old *manoir* a home fit for a prince. I have been over the whole estate, too, with the worthy M. Hébert, —a superb property!"

"Which M. Louvier appears to appreciate," said Alain, with a somewhat melancholy smile, extending to Duplessis the menacing notice.

Duplessis glanced at it, and said drily, "M. Louvier knows what he is about. But I think we had better put an immediate stop to formalities which must be painful to a creditor so benevolent. I do not presume to offer to pay the interest due on the security you can give for the repayment. If you refused that offer from so old a friend as Lemercier, of course you could not accept it from me. I make another proposal, to which you can scarcely object. I do not like to give my scheming rival on the Bourse the triumph of so profoundly planned a speculation. Aid me to defeat him. Let me take the mortgage on myself, and become sole mortgagee—hush!—on this condition, that there should be an entire union of interest between us two; that I should be at liberty to make the improvements I desire, and when the improvements be made, there should be a fair arrangement as to the proportion of profits due to me as mortgagee and improver, to you as original owner. Attend, my dear Marquis, — I am speaking as a mere man of business. I see my way to adding more than a third—I might even say a half—to the present revenues of Rochebriant. The woods have been sadly neglected, drainage alone would add greatly to their produce. Your orchards might be rendered magnificent supplies to Paris with better cultivation. Lastly, I would devote to building purposes or to market gardens all the lands round the two towns of —— and ——. I think I can lay my hands on suitable speculators for these last experiments.

"In a word, though the market value of Rochebriant, as it now stands, would not be equivalent to the debt on it, in five or six years

it could be made worth—well, I will not say how much—but we shall be both well satisfied with the result. Meanwhile, if you allow me to find purchasers for your timber, and if you will not suffer the Chevalier de Finisterre to regulate your expenses, you need have no fear that the interest due to me will not be regularly paid, even though I shall be compelled, for the first year or two at least, to ask a higher rate of interest than Louvier exacted—say a quarter per cent. more; and in suggesting that, you will comprehend that this is now a matter of business between us, and not of friendship."

Alain turned his head aside to conceal his emotion, and then with the quick affectionate impulse of the genuine French nature, threw himself on the financier's breast and kissed him on both cheeks.

"You save me! you save the home and tombs of my ancestors! Thank you I cannot: but I believe in God—I pray—I will pray for you as for a father; and if ever," he hurried on in broken words, "I am mean enough to squander on idle luxuries one franc that I should save for the debt due to you, chide me as a father would chide a graceless son."

Moved as Alain was, Duplessis was moved yet more deeply. "What father would not be proud of such a son? Ah, if I had such a one!" he said softly. Then, quickly recovering his wonted composure, he added, with the sardonic smile which often chilled his friends and alarmed his foes, "Monsieur Louvier is about to pass that which I ventured to promise him, a '*mauvais quart d'heure.*' Lend me that *commandment tendant à saise.* I must be off to my *avoué* with instructions. If you have no better engagement, pray dine with me to-day, and accompany Valérie and myself to the opera."

I need not say that Alain accepted the invitation. How happy Valérie was that evening!

CHAPTER IX.

THE next day Duplessis was surprised by a visit from M. Louvier—that magnate of *millionnaires* had never before set foot in the house of his younger and less famous rival.

The burly man entered the room with a face much flushed, and with more than his usual mixture of jovial *brusquerie* and opulent swagger.

"Startled to see me, I daresay," began Louvier, as soon as the door was closed. "I have this morning received a communication from your agent containing a cheque for the interest due to me from M. Rochebriant, and a formal notice of your intention to pay off the principal on behalf of that popinjay prodigal. Though we two have not hitherto been the best friends in the world, I thought it fair to a man in your station to come to you direct and say, '*Cher confrère*, what swindler has bubbled you? you don't know the real condition of this Breton property, or you would never so throw away your millions. The property is not worth the mortgage I have on it by 30,000 louis.'"

"Then, M. Louvier, you will be 30,000 louis the richer if I take the mortgage off your hands."

"I can afford the loss—no offence—better than you can; and I may have fancies which I don't mind paying for, but which cannot influence another. See, I have brought with me the exact schedule of all details respecting this property. You need not question their accuracy; they have been arranged by the Marquis's own agents, M. Gandrin and M. Hébert. They contain, you will perceive, every possible item of revenue, down to an apple-tree. Now, look at that, and tell me if you are justified in lending such a sum on such a property."

"Thank you very much for an interest in my affairs that I scarcely ventured to expect M. Louvier to entertain; but I see that I have a duplicate of this paper, furnished to me very honestly by M. Hébert himself. Besides, I, too, have fancies which I don't mind paying for, and among them may be a fancy for the lands of Rochebriant."

"Look you, Duplessis, when a man like me asks a favor, you may be sure that he has the power to repay it. Let me have my whim here, and ask anything you like from me in return!"

"*Désolé* not to oblige you, but this has become not only a whim of mine, but a matter of honor; and honor, you know, my dear M. Louvier, is the first principle of sound finance. I have myself, after careful inspection of the Rochebriant property, volunteered to its owner

to advance the money to pay off your *hypothèque;* and what would be said on the Bourse if Lucien Duplessis failed in an obligation!"

"I think I can guess what will one day be said of Lucien Duplessis if he make an irrevocable enemy of Paul Louvier. *Corbleu! mon cher*, a man of thrice your capital, who watched every speculation of yours with a hostile eye, might some *beau jour* make even you a bankrupt!"

"Forewarned, forearmed!" replied Duplessis, imperturbably. "'*Fas est ab hoste doceri*,'—I mean, 'It is right to be taught by an enemy;' and I never remember the day when you were otherwise, and yet I am not a bankrupt, though I receive you in a house which, thanks to you, is so modest in point of size!"

"Bah! that was a mistake of mine,—and, ah! ah! you had your revenge there—that forest!"

"Well, as a peace-offering, I will give you up the forest, and content my ambition as a landed proprietor with this bad speculation of Rochebriant!"

"Confound the forest, I don't care for it now! I can sell my place for more than it has cost me to one of your imperial favorites. Build a palace in your forest. Let me have Rochebriant, and name your terms."

"A thousand pardons! but I have already had the honor to inform you, that I have contracted an obligation which does not allow me to listen to terms."

As a serpent, that, after all crawlings and windings, rears itself on end, Louvier rose, crest erect—

"So then it is finished. I came here disposed to offer peace—you refuse, and declare war."

"Not at all, I do not declare war; I accept it if forced on me."

"Is that your last word, M. Duplessis?"

"Monsieur Louvier, it is."

"*Bon jour!*"

And Louvier strode to the door; here he paused—"Take a day to consider."

"Not a moment."

"Your servant, Monsieur,—your very humble servant." Louvier vanished.

Duplessis leaned his large thoughtful forehead on his thin nervous hand. "This loan will pinch me," he muttered. "I must be very wary now with such a foe. Well, why should I care to be rich? Valérie's *dot*, Valérie's happiness, are secured."

CHAPTER X.

Madame Savarin wrote a very kind and very apologetic letter to Isaura, but, no answer was returned to it. Madame Savarin did not venture to communicate to her husband the substance of a conversation which had ended so painfully. He had, in theory, a delicacy of tact, which, if he did not always exhibit it in practice made him a very severe critic of its deficiency in others. Therefore, unconscious of the offence given, he made a point of calling at Isaura's apartments, and leaving word with her servant that "he was sure she would be pleased to hear M. Rameau was somewhat better, though still in danger."

It was not till the third day after her interview with Madame Savarin that Isaura left her own room,—she did so to receive Mrs. Morley.

The fair American was shocked to see the change in Isaura's countenance. She was very pale, and with that indescribable appearance of exhaustion which betrays continued want of sleep; her soft eyes were dim, the play of her lips was gone, her light step weary and languid.

"My poor darling!" cried Mrs. Morley, embracing her, "you have indeed been ill! What is the matter?—who attends you?"

"I need no physician, it was but a passing cold—the air of Paris is very trying. Never mind me, dear—what is the last news?"

Therewith Mrs. Morley ran glibly through the principal topics of the hour—the breach threatened between M. Ollivier and his former Liberal partisans; the tone unexpectedly taken by M. de Girardin; the speculations as to the result of the trial of the alleged conspirators against the Emperor's life, which was fixed to take place towards the end of that month of June,—all matters of no slight importance to the interests of an empire. Sunk deep into the recesses of her *fauteuil*, Isaura seemed to listen quietly, till when a pause came, she said in cold clear tones—

"And Mr. Graham Vane—he has refused your invitation?"

"I am sorry to say he has—he is so engaged in London."

"I knew he had refused," said Isaura with a low bitter laugh.

"How? who told you?"

"My own good sense told me. One may have good sense, though one is a poor scribbler."

"Don't talk in that way; it is beneath you to angle for compliments."

"Compliments, ah! And so Mr. Vane has refused to come to Paris; never mind, he will come next year. I shall not be in Paris then. Did Colonel Morley see Mr. Vane?"

"Oh yes; two or three times."

"He is well?"

"Quite well, I believe—at least Frank did not say to the contrary; but, from what I hear, he is not the person I took him for. Many people told Frank that he is much changed since he came into his fortune—is grown very stingy, quite miserly indeed; declines even a seat in Parliament because of the expense. It is astonishing how money does spoil a man."

"He had come into his fortune when he was here. Money had not spoiled then."

Isaura paused, pressing her hands tightly together; then she suddenly rose to her feet, the color on her cheek mantling and receding rapidly, and fixing on her startled visitor eyes no longer dim, but with something half fierce, half imploring in their passion of their gaze, said—"Your husband spoke of me to Mr. Vane: I know he did. What did Mr. Vane answer? Do not evade my question. The truth! the truth! I only ask the truth!"

"Give me you hand; sit here beside me, dearest child."

"Child!—no, I am a woman!—weak as a woman, but strong as a woman too!—The truth!"

Mrs. Morley had come prepared to carry out the resolution she had formed and "break" to Isaura "the truth," that which the girl now demanded. But then she had meant to break the truth in her own gentle gradual way. Thus suddenly called upon, her courage failed her. She burst into tears. Isaura gazed at her dry-eyed.

"Your tears answer me. Mr. Vane has heard that I have been insulted. A man like him does not stoop to love for a woman who has known an insult. I do not blame him; I honor him the more—he is right."

"No—no—no!—you insulted! Who dared to insult you? (Mrs. Morley had never heard the story about the Russian Prince). Mr. Vane spoke to Frank, and writes of you to me as of one whom it is impossible not to admire, to respect; but—I cannot say it—you will have the truth,—there, read and judge for yourself." And Mrs. Morley drew forth and thrust into Isaura's hands the letter she had concealed from her husband. The letter was not very long; it began with expressions of warm gratitude to Mrs. Morley, not for her invitation only, but for the interest she had conceived in his happiness. It then went on thus:—

"I join with my whole heart in all that you say, with such eloquent justice, of the mental and personal gifts so bounteously lavished by nature on the young lady whom you name.

"No one can feel more sensible than I of the charm of so exquisite a lovelinesss; no one can more sincerely join in the belief that the praise which greets the commencement of her career is but the whisper of the praise that will cheer its progress with louder and louder plaudits.

"He only would be worthy of her hand, who, if not equal to herself in genius, would feel raised into partnership with it by sympathy with its objects and joy in its triumphs. For myself, the same pain with which I should have learned she had adopted the profession which she originally contemplated, saddened and stung me when, choosing a career that confers a renown yet more lasting than the stage, she no less left behind her the peaceful immunities of private life. Were I even free to consult only my own heart in the choice of the one sole partner of my destinies (which I cannot at present honestly say that I am, though I had expected to be so ere this, when I last saw you at Paris;) could I even hope—which I have no right to do—that I could chain to myself any private portion of thoughts which flow into the larger channels by which poets enrich the blood of the world,—still (I say it in self-reproach, it may be the fault of my English rearing, it may rather be the fault of an egotism peculiar to myself)—still I doubt if I could render happy any woman whose world could not be narrowed to the Home that she adorned and blessed.

"And yet not even the jealous tyranny of man's love could dare to say to natures like hers of whom we speak, 'Limit to the household glory of one the light which genius has placed in its firmament for the use and enjoyment of all.'"

"I thank you so much," said Isaura, calmly; "suspense makes a woman so weak—certainty so strong." Mechanically she smoothed and refolded the letter—mechanically, but with slow lingering hands—then she extended it to her friend, smiling.

"Nay, will you not keep it yourself?" said Mrs. Morley. "The more you examine the narrow-minded prejudices, the English arrogant *man's* jealous dread of superiority—nay, of equality—in the woman he can only value as he does his house or his horse, because she is his exclusive property, the more you will be rejoiced to find yourself free for a more worthy choice. Keep the letter; read it till you feel for the writer forgiveness and disdain."

Isaura took back the letter, and leaned her cheek on her hand, looking dreamily into space. It was some moments before she replied, and her words then had no reference to Mrs. Morley's consolatory exhortation.

"He was so pleased when he learned that I renounced the career on which I had set my ambition. I thought he would have been so pleased when I sought in another career to raise myself nearer to his level—I see now how sadly I was mistaken. All that perplexed me before in him is explained. I did not guess how foolishly I had deceived myself till three days days ago,—then I did guess it; and it was that guess which tortured me so terribly that I could not keep my heart to myself when I saw you to-day; in spite of all womanly pride it would force its way—to the truth. Hush! I must tell you what was said to me by another friend of mine—a good friend, a wise and kind one. Yet I was so angry when she said it that I thought I could never see her more."

"My sweet darling! who was this friend, and what did she say to you?"

"The friend was Madame Savarin."

"No woman loves you more except myself—and she said?"

"That she would have suffered no daughter of hers to commit her name to the talk of the world as I have done—be exposed to the risk of insult as I have been—until she had the shelter and protection denied to me. And I having thus overleaped the bound that a prudent mother would prescribe to her child, have become one whose hand men do not seek, unless they themselves take the same roads to notoriety. Do you not think she was right?"

"Not as you so morbidly put it, silly girl—certainly not right. But I do wish you had the shelter and protection which Madame Savarin meant to express; I do wish that you were happily married to one very different from Mr. Vane—one who would be more proud of your genius than of your beauty—one who would say, 'My name, safer far in its enduring nobility than those that depend on titles and lands—which are held on the tenure of the popular breath—must be honored by prosperity, for she has deigned to make it hers. No democratic revolution can disennoble *me*."

"Ay, ay, you believe that men will be found to think with complacency that they owe to a wife a name that they could not achieve for themselves. Possibly there are such men. Where?—among those that are already united by sympathies in the same callings, the same labors, the same hopes and fears, with the women who have left behind them the privacies of home. Madame de Grantmesnil was wrong. Artists should wed with artists. True—true!"

Here she passed her hand over her forehead—it was a pretty way of hers when seeking to concentrate thought—and was silent a moment or so.

"Did you ever feel," she then asked dreamily, "that there are moments in life when a dark curtain seems to fall over one's past that a day before was so clear, so blended with the present? One cannot any longer look behind; the gaze is attracted onward, and a track of fire flashes upon the future—the future which yesterday was invisible. There is a line by some English poet—Mr. Vane once quoted it, not to me, but to M. Savarin, and in illustration of his argument, that the most complicated recesses of thought are best reached by the simplest forms of expression. I said to myself, 'I will study that truth if ever I take to literature as I have taken to song;' and—yes—it was that evening that the ambition fatal to woman fixed on me its relentless fangs

at Enghien—we were on the lake—the sun was setting."

"But you do not tell me the line that so impressed you," said Mrs. Morley, with a woman's kindly tact.

"The line—which line? Oh, I remember; the line was this—

'I see as from a tower the end of all.'

And now—kiss me, dearest—never a word again to me about this conversation: never a word about Mr. Vane—the dark curtain has fallen on the past."

CHAPTER XI.

MEN and women are much more like each other in certain large elements of character than is generally supposed, but it is that very resemblance which makes their differences the more incomprehensible to each other; just as in politics, theology, or that most disputatious of all things disputable, metaphysics, the nearer the reasoners approach each other in points that to an uncritical bystander seem the most important, the more sure they are to start off in opposite directions upon reaching the speck of a pin-prick.

Now there are certain grand meeting-places between man and woman—the grandest of all is on the ground of love, and yet here also is the great field of quarrel. And here the teller of a tale such as mine ought, if he is sufficiently wise to be humble, to know that it is almost profanation if, as man, he presumes to enter the penetralia of a woman's innermost heart, and repeat, as a man would repeat, all the vibrations of sound which the heart of a woman sends forth undistinguishable even to her own ear.

I know Isaura as intimately as if I had rocked her in her cradle, played with her in her childhood, educated and trained her in her youth; and yet I can no more tell you faithfully what passed in her mind during the forty eight hours that intervened between her conversation with that American lady and her reappearance in some commonplace drawing-room, than I can tell you what the Man in the Moon might feel if the sun that his world reflected were blotted out of creation.

I can only say that when she reappeared in that commonplace drawing-room world, there was a change in her face not very perceptible to the ordinary observer. If anything, to his eye she was handsomer—the eye was brighter—the complexion (always lustrous though somewhat pale, the limpid paleness that suits so well with dark hair (was yet more lustrous,—it was flushed into delicate rose hues—hues that still better suit with dark hair. What, then, was the change, and change not for the better? The lips, once so pensively sweet, had grown hard; on the brow that had seemed to laugh when the lips did, there was no longer sympathy between brow and lip; there was scarcely seen a fine thread-like line that in a few years would be a furrow on the space between the eyes; the voice was not so tenderly soft; the step was haughtier. What all such change denoted it is for a woman to decide—I can only guess. In the meanwhile, Mademoiselle Cicogna had sent her servant daily to inquire after M. Rameau. That, I think, she would have done under any circumstances. Meanwhile, too, she had called on Madame Savarin—made it up with her—sealed the reconciliation by a cold kiss. That, too, under any circumstances, I think she would have done—under some circumstances the kiss might have been less cold.

There was one thing unwonted in her habits. I mention it, though it is only a woman who can say if it means anything worth noticing.

For six days she had left a letter from Madame de Grantmesnil unanswered. With Madame de Grantmesnil was connected the whole of her innermost life—from the day when the lonely desolate child had seen, beyond the dusty thoroughfares of life, gleams of the faery land in poetry and art—onward through her restless, dreamy, aspiring youth—onward—onward—till now, through all that constitutes the glorious reality that we call romance.

Never before had she left for days unanswered letters which were to her as Sibylline leaves to some unquiet neophyte yearning for solutions to enigmas suggested, whether by the world without or by the soul within. For six days Madame de Grantmesnil's letter remained unanswered, unread, neglected, thrust out of sight; just as when some imperious necessity compels us to grapple with a world that is, we cast aside the romance which, in our holiday

hours, had beguiled us to a world with which we have interests and sympathies no more.

CHAPTER XII.

GUSTAVE recovered, but slowly. The physician pronounced him out of all immediate danger, but said frankly to him, and somewhat more guardedly to his parents, "There is ample cause to beware." "Look you, my young friend," he added to Rameau, "mere brain-work seldom kills a man once accustomed to it like you; but heart-work, and stomach-work, and nerve-work, added to a brain-work, may soon consign to the coffin a frame ten times more robust than yours. Write as much as you will—that is your vocation; but it is not your vocation to drink absinthe—to preside at orgies in the *Maison Dorée*. Regulate yourself, and not after the fashion of the fabulous Don Juan. Marry—live soberly and quietly—and you may survive the grandchildren of *viveurs*. Go on as you have done, and before the year is out you are in *Père la Chaise*."

Rameau listened languidly, but with a profound conviction that the physician thoroughly understood his case.

Lying helpless on his bed, he had no desire for orgies at the *Maison Dorée;* with parched lips thirsty for innocent *tisane* of lime-blossoms, the thought of absinthe was as odious to him as the liquid fire of Phlegethon. If ever sinner became suddenly convinced that there was a good deal to be said in favor of a moral life, that sinner at the moment I speak of was Gustave Rameau. Certainly a moral life—"*Domus et placens uxor*," were essential to the poet who, aspiring to immortal glory, was condemned to the ailments of a very perishable frame.

"Ah," he murmured plaintively to himself, "that girl Isaura can have no true sympathy with genius! It is no ordinary man that she will kill in me!"

And so murmuring he fell asleep. When he woke and found his head pillowed on his mother's breast, it was much as a sensitive, delicate man may wake after having drunk too much the night before. Repentant, mournful, maudlin, he began to weep, and in the course of his weeping he confided to his mother the secret of his heart.

Isaura had refused him—that refusal had made him desperate.

"Ah! with Isaura how changed would be his habits! how pure! how healthful!" His mother listened fondly, and did her best to comfort him and cheer his drooping spirits.

She told him of Isaura's messages of inquiry duly twice a-day. Rameau, who knew more about women in general, and Isaura in particular, than his mother conjectured, shook his head mournfully. "She could not do less," he said. "Has no one offered to do more?"—He thought of Julie when he asked that—Madame Rameau hesitated.

These poor Parisians! it is the *mode* to preach against them; and before my book closes, I shall have to preach—no, not to preach, but to imply—plenty of faults to consider and amend. Meanwhile I try my best to take them, as the philosophy of life tells us to take other people, for what they are.

I do not think the domestic relations of the Parisian *bourgeoisie* are as bad as they are said to be in the French novels. Madame Rameau is not an uncommon type of her class. She had been when she first married singularly handsome. It was from her that Gustave inherited his beauty; and her husband was a very ordinary type of the French shopkeeper—very plain, by no means intellectual, but gay, good-humored, devotedly attached to his wife, and with implicit trust in her conjugal virtue. Never was trust better placed. There was not a happier nor a more faithful couple in the *quartier* in which they resided. Madame Rameau hesitated when her boy, thinking of Julie, asked if no one had done more than send to inquire after him as Isaura had done.

After that hesitating pause she said, "Yes—a young lady calling herself Mademoiselle Julie Caumartin wished to install herself here as your nurse. When I said, 'But I am his mother—he needs no other nurses,' she would have retreated, and looked ashamed—poor thing! I don't blame her if she loved my son. But, my son, I say this,—if you love her, don't talk to me about that Mademoiselle Cicogna; and if you love Mademoiselle Cicogna, why, then your father will take care that the poor girl who loved you—not knowing that you loved another—is not left to the temptation of penury."

Rameau's pale lips withered into a phantom-like sneer. Julie! the resplendent Julie!—

true, only a ballet-dancer, but whose equipage in the Bois had once been the envy of duchesses—Julie! who had sacrificed fortune for his sake—who, freed from him, could have *millionnaires* again at her feet!—Julie! to be saved from penury, as a shopkeeper would save an erring nursemaid—Julie! the irrepressible Julie! who had written to him, the day before his illness, in a pen dipped, not in ink, but in blood from a vein she had opened in her arm: "Traitor!—I have not seen thee for three days. Dost thou dare to love another? If so, I care not how thou attempt to conceal it—woe to her! *Ingrat!* woe to thee! Love is not love, unless, when betrayed by Love, it appeals to death. Answer me quick—quick.—JULIE."

Poor Gustave thought of that letter and groaned. Certainly his mother was right—he sought to get rid of Julie; but he did not clearly see how Julie was to be got rid of. He replied to Madame Rameau peevishly, "Don't trouble your head about Mademoiselle Caumartin; she is in no want of money. Of course, if I could hope for Isaura—but, alas! I dare not hope. Give me my *tisane*."

When the doctor called next day, he looked grave, and, drawing Madame Rameau into the next room, he said, "We are not getting on so well as I had hoped; the fever is gone, but there is much to apprehend from the debility left behind. His spirits are sadly depressed." Then added the doctor, pleasantly, and with that wonderful insight into our complex humanity in which physicians excel poets, and in which Parisian physicians are not excelled by any physicians in the world,—"Can't you think of any bit of good news—that 'M. Thiers raves about your son's last poem'—that 'it is a question among the Academicians between him and Jules Janin'—or that 'the beautiful Duchesse de—— has been placed in a lunatic asylum because she has gone mad for love of a certain young Red Republican whose name begins with R.'—can't you think of any bit of similar good news? If you can, it will be a tonic to the relaxed state of your dear boy's *amour propre*, compared to which all the drugs in the Pharmacopœia are moonshine and water; and meanwhile be sure to remove him to your own house, and out of the reach of his giddy young friends, as soon as you possibly can."

When that great authority thus left his patient's case in the hands of the mother, she said—"The boy shall be saved."

CHAPTER XIII.

ISAURA was seated beside the Venosta,—to whom, of late, she seemed to cling with greater fondness than ever—working at some piece of embroidery—a labor from which she had been estranged for years; but now she had taken writing, reading, music, into passionate disgust. Isaura was thus seated, silently intent upon her work, and the Venosta in full talk, when the servant announced Madame Rameau.

The name startled both; the Venosta had never heard that the poet had a mother living, and immediately jumped to the conclusion that Madame Rameau must be a wife he had hitherto kept unrevealed. And when a woman, still very handsome, with a countenance grave and sad, entered the *salon*, the Venosta murmured, "The husband's perfidy reveals itself on a wife's face," and took out her handkerchief in preparation for sympathizing tears.

"Mademoiselle," said the visitor, halting, with eyes fixed on Isaura, "pardon my intrusion—my son has the honor to be known to you. Every one who knows him must share in my sorrow—so young—so promising, and in such danger—my poor boy!" Madame Rameau stopped abruptly. Her tears forced their way—she turned aside to conceal them.

In her twofold condition of being—womanhood and genius—Isaura was too largely endowed with that quickness of sympathy which distinguishes woman from man, and genius from talent, not to be wondrously susceptible to pity.

Already she had wound her arm round the grieving mother—already drawn her to the seat from which she herself had risen—and bending over her had said some words—true, conventional enough in themselves,—but cooed forth in a voice the softest I ever expect to hear, save in dreams, on this side of the grave.

Madame Rameau swept her hand over her eyes, glanced round the room, and noticing the Venosta in dressing-robe and slippers, staring with those Italian eyes, in seeming so quietly

innocent, in reality so searchingly shrewd, she whispered pleadingly "May I speak to you a few minutes alone?" This was not a request that Isaura could refuse, though she was embarrassed and troubled by the surmise of Madame Rameau's object in asking it; accordingly she led her visitor into the adjoining room, and making an apologetic sign to the Venosta, closed the door.

CHAPTER XIV.

When they were alone, Madame Rameau took Isaura's hand in both her own, and gazing wistfully into her face, said, "No wonder you are so loved—yours is the beauty that sinks into the heart and rests there. I prize my boy more, now that I have seen you. But, oh Mademoiselle! pardon me—do not withdraw your hand—pardon the mother who comes from the sick-bed of her only son and asks if you will assist to save him! A word from you is life or death to him!"

"Nay, nay, do not speak thus, Madame; your son knows how much I value, how sincerely I return, his friendship; but—but," she paused a moment, and continued sadly and with tearful eyes—"I have no heart to give to him—to any one."

"I do not—I would not if I dared—ask what it would be violence to yourself to promise. I do not ask you to bid me return to my son and say, 'Hope and recover,' but let me take some healing message from your lips. If I understand your words rightly, I at least may say that you do not give to another the hopes you deny to him?"

"So far you understand me rightly, Madame. It has been said that romance writers give away so much of their hearts to heroes or heroines of their own creation, that they leave nothing worth the giving to human beings like themselves. Perhaps it is so; yet, Madame," added Isaura, with a smile of exquisite sweetness in its melancholy, "I have heart enough left to feel for you."

Madame Rameau was touched. "Ah, Mademoiselle, I do not believe in the saying you have quoted. But I must not abuse your goodness by pressing further upon you subjects from which you shrink. Only one word more: you know that my husband and I are but quiet tradesfolk, not in the society, nor aspiring to it, to which my son's talents have raised himself; yet dare I ask that you will not close here the acquaintance that I have obtruded on you?—dare I ask, that I may, now and then, call on you—that now and then I may see you at my own home? Believe that I would not here ask anything which your own mother would disapprove if she overlooked disparities of station. Humble as our home is, slander never passed its threshold."

"Ah, Madame, I and the Signorina Venosta, whom in our Italian tongue I call mother, can but feel honored and grateful whenever it pleases you to receive visits from us."

"It would be a base return for such gracious compliance with my request if I concealed from you the reason why I pray Heaven to bless you for that answer. The physician says that it may be long before my son is sufficiently convalescent to dispense with a mother's care, and resume his former life and occupation in the great world. It is everything for us if we can coax him into coming under our own roof-tree. This is difficult to do. It is natural for a young man launched into the world to like his own *chez lui*. Then what will happen to Gustave? He, lonely and heart-stricken, will ask friends, young as himself, but far stronger, to come and cheer him; or he will seek to distract his thoughts by the overwork of his brain; in either case he is doomed. But I have stronger motives yet to fix him awhile at our hearth. This is just the moment, once lost never to be regained, when soothing companionship, gentle reproachless advice, can fix him lastingly in the habits and modes of life which will banish all fears of his future from the hearts of his parents. You at least honor him with friendship, with kindly interest—you at least would desire to wean him from all that a friend may disapprove or lament—a creature whom Providence meant to be good, and perhaps great. If I say to him, "It will be long before you can go out and see your friends, but at my house your friends shall come and see you—among them Signora Venosta and

Mademoiselle Cicogna will now and then drop in—my victory is gained, and my son is saved.'"

"Madame," said Isaura, half sobbing, "what a blessing to have a mother like you! Love so noble ennobles those who hear its voice. Tell your son how ardently I wish him to be well, and to fulfil more than the promise of his genius: tell him also this—how I envy him his mother!"

CHAPTER XV.

It needs no length of words to inform thee, my intelligent reader, be thou man or woman—but more especially woman—of the consequences following each other, as wave follows wave in a tide, that resulted from the interview with which my last chapter closed. Gustave is removed to his parents' house; he remains for weeks confined within doors, or, on sunny days, taken an hour or so in his own carriage, drawn by the horse bought from Rochebriant, into by-roads remote from the fashionable world; Isaura visits his mother, liking, respecting, influenced by her more and more; in those visits she sits beside the sofa on which Rameau reclines. Gradually, gently—more and more by his mother's lips—is impressed on her the belief that it is in her power to save a human life, and to animate its career towards those goals which are never based wholly upon earth in the earnest eyes of genius, or perhaps in the yet more upward vision of pure-souled believing woman.

And Gustave himself, as he passes through the slow stages of convalescence, seems so gratefully to ascribe to her every step in his progress—seems so gently softened in character—seems so refined from the old affectations, so ennobled above the old cynicism—and, above all, so needing her presence, so sunless without it, that—well, need I finish the sentence?—the reader will complete what I leave unsaid.

Enough, that one day Isaura returned home from a visit at Madame Rameau's with the knowledge that her hand was pledged—her future life disposed of; and that, escaping from the Venosta, whom she so fondly, and in her hunger for a mother's love, called *Madre*, the girl shut herself up in her own room with locked doors.

Ah, poor child! ah, sweet-voiced Isaura! whose delicate image I feel myself too rude and too hard to transfer to this page in the purity of its outlines, and the blended softnesses of its hues—thou who, when saying things serious in the words men use, saidst them with a seriousness so charming, and with looks so feminine—thou, of whom no man I ever knew was quite worthy—ah, poor, simple, miserable girl, as I see thee now in the solitude of that white-curtained virginal room; hast thou, then, merged at last thy peculiar star into the cluster of all these commonplace girls whose lips have said "Ay," when their hearts said "No?"—thou, oh brilliant Isaura! thou, oh poor motherless child!

She had sunk into her chair—her own favorite chair—the covering of it had been embroidered by Madame de Grantmesnil, and bestowed on her as a birthday present last year—the year in which she had first learned what it is to love—the year in which she had first learned what it is to strive for fame. And somehow uniting, as many young people do, love and fame in dreams of the future, that silken seat had been to her as the Tripod of Delphi was to the Pythian: she had taken to it, as it were intuitively, in all those hours, whether of joy or sorrow, when youth seeks to prophesy, and does but dream.

There she sate now, in a sort of stupor—a sort of dreary bewilderment—the illusion of the Pythian gone—desire of dream and of prophecy alike extinct—pressing her hands together, and muttering to herself, "What has happened?—what have I done?"

Three hours later you would not have recognized the same face that you see now. For then the bravery, the honor, the loyalty of the girl's nature had asserted their command. Her promise had been given to one man—it could not be recalled. Thought itself of any other man must be banished. On her hearth lay ashes and tinder—the last remains of every treasured note from Graham Vane; of the hoarded newspaper extracts that contained his name; of the dry treatise he had published, and which had made the lovely romance-

writer first desire "to know something about politics." Ay, if the treatise had been upon fox-hunting, she would have desired "to know something about" that! Above all, yet distinguishable from the rest—as the sparks still upon stem and leaf here and there faintly glowed and twinkled—the withered flowers which recorded that happy hour in the arbor, and the walks of the forsaken garden—the hour in which she had so blissfully pledged herself to renounce that career in art wherein fame would have been secured, but which would not have united Fame with Love—in dreams evermore over now.

BOOK TENTH.

CHAPTER I.

GRAHAM VANE had heard nothing for months from M. Renard, when one morning he received the letter I translate:—

"MONSIEUR,—I am happy to inform you that I have at last obtained one piece of information which may lead to a more important discovery. When we parted after our fruitful research in Vienna, we had both concurred in the persuasion, that for some reason known only to the two ladies themselves, Madame Marigny and Madame Duval had exchanged names—that it was Madame Marigny who had deceased in the name of Madame Duval, and Madame Duval who had survived in that of Marigny.

"It was clear to me that the *beau Monsieur* who had visited the false Duval must have been cognizant of this exchange of name, and that if his name and whereabouts could be ascertained, he, in all prabability, would know what had become of the lady who is the object of our research; and after the lapse of so many years he would probably have very slight motive to preserve that concealment of facts which might, no doubt, have been convenient at the time. The lover of the *soi-disant* Mademoiselle Duval was by such accounts as we could gain a man of some rank—very possibly a married man; and the *liaison*, in short, was one of those which, while they last, necessitate precautions and secrecy.

"Therefore, dismissing all attempts at further trace of the missing lady, I resolved to return to Vienna as soon as the business that recalled me to Paris was concluded, and devote myself exclusively to the search after the amorous and mysterious Monsieur.

"I did not state this determination to you, because, possibly, I might be in error—or, if not in error, at least too sanguine in my expectations—and it is best to avoid disappointing an honorable client.

"One thing was clear, that, at the time of the *soi-disant* Duval's decease, the *beau Monsieur* was at Vienna.

"It appeared also tolerably clear that when the lady friend of the deceased quitted Munich so privately, it was to Vienna she repaired, and from Vienna comes the letter demanding the certificates of Madame Duval's death. Pardon me if I remind you of all these circumstances, no doubt fresh in your recollection. I repeat them in order to justify the conclusions to which they led me.

"I could not, however, get permission to absent myself from Paris for the time I might require till the end of last April. I had meanwhile sought all private means of ascertaining what Frenchmen of rank and station were in that capital in the autumn of 1849. Among the list of the very few such Messieurs I fixed upon one as the most likely to be the mysterious Achille—Achille was, indeed, his *nom de bapteme*.

"A man of intrigue—*a bonnes fortunes*—of lavish expenditure withal; very tenacious of his dignity, and avoiding any petty scandals by which it might be lowered; just the man who, in some passing affair of gallantry with a lady of doubtful repute, would never have signed his titular designation to a letter, and would have kept himself as much incognito as he could. But this man was dead—had been dead some years. He had not died at Vienna—never visited that capital for some years before his death. He was then and had long been, the *ami de la maison* of one of those *grandes dames* of whose intimacy *grands seigneurs* are not ashamed. They parade there the *bonnes fortunes* they conceal elsewhere. Monsieur and the *grande dame* were at Baden when the former died. Now, Monsieur, a Don Juan of that stamp is pretty sure always to have a confidential Leporello. If I could find Leporello alive I might learn the secrets not to be extracted from a Don Juan defunct. I ascertained, in truth, both at Vienna, to which I first repaired in order to verify the *renseigniments* I had obtained at Paris, and at Baden, to which I then bent my way, that this brilliant noble had a favorite valet who had lived with him from his youth—an Italian, who had contrived in the course of his service to lay by savings enough to set up a hotel somewhere in Italy, supposed to be Pisa. To Pisa I repaired, but the man had left some years; his hotel had not prospered—he had left in debt. No one could say what had become of him. At last, after a long and tedious research, I found him installed as manager of a small hotel at Genoa—a pleasant fellow enough; and after friendly intercourse with him (of course I lodged at his hotel), I easily led him to talk of his earlier life and adventures, and especially of his former master, of whose splendid career in the army of '*La Belle Deesse*' he was not a little proud. It was not very easy to get him to the particular subject in question. In fact, the affair with the poor false Duval had been so brief and undistinguished an episode in his master's life, that it was not without a strain of memory that he reached it.

"By little and little, however, in the course of two or three evenings, and by the aid of many flasks of Orvietta or bottles of Lacrima (wines, Monsieur, that I do not commend to any one who desires to keep his stomach sound and his secrets safe), I gathered these particulars.

"Our Don Juan, since the loss of a wife in the first year of marriage, had rarely visited Paris, where he had a domicile—his ancestral hotel there he had sold.

"But happening to visit that capital of Europe a few

months-before we came to our dates at Aix-l-Chapelle, he made acquaintance with Madame Marigny, a natural daughter of high-placed parents, by whom, of course, she had never been acknowledged, but who had contrived that she should receive a good education at a convent; and on leaving it also contrived that an old soldier of fortune—which means an officer without fortune—who had served in Algiers with some distinction, should offer her his hand, and add the modest *dot* they assigned her to his yet more modest income. They contrived also that she should understand the offer must be accepted. Thus Mademoiselle '*Quelque Chose*' became Madame Marigny, and she, on her part, contrived that a year or so later she should be left a widow. After a marriage, of course, the parents washed their hands of her—they had done their duty. At the time Don Juan made this lady's acquaintance nothing could be said against her character; but the milliners and butchers had begun to imply that they would rather have her money than trust to her character. Don Juan fell in love with her, satisfied the immediate claims of milliner and butcher, and when they quitted Paris it was agreed that they should meet later at Aix-la-Chapelle. But when he resorted to that sultry, and, to my mind, unalluring spa, he was surprised by a line from her saying that she had changed her name of Marigny for that of Duval.

"'I recollect,' said Leporello, 'that two days afterwards my master said to me, "Caution and secrecy. Don't mention my name at the house to which I may send you with any note for Madame Duval. I don't announce my name when I call. *La petit* Marigny has exchanged her name for that of Louise Duval; and I find that there is a Louise Duval here, her friend, who is niece to a relation of my own, and a terrible relation to quarrel with—a dead shot and unrivalled swordsman—Victor de Maulèon." My master was brave enough, but he enjoyed life, and he did not think *la petit* Marigna worth being killed for.'

"Leporello remembered very little of what followed. All he did remember is that Don Juan, when at Vienna, said to him one morning, looking less gay than usual, 'It is finished with *la petite* Marigny—she is no more.' Then he ordered his bath, wrote a note, and said with tears in his eyes, 'Take this to Mademoiselle Celeste; not to be compared to *la petite* Marigny; but *la petite* Celeste is still alive.' Ah, Monsieur! if only any man in France could be as proud of his ruler as that Italian was of my countryman! Alas! we Frenchmen are all made to command—or at least we think ourselves so—and we are insulted by one who says to us, 'Serve and obey.' Now-a-days, in France we find all Don Juans and no Leporellos.

"After strenuous exertions upon my part to recall to Leporello's mind, the important question whether he had ever seen the true Duval, passing under the name of Marigny—whether she had not presented herself to his master at Vienna or elsewhere—he rubbed his forehead, and drew from it these reminiscences.

"'On the day that his Excellency,'—Leporello generally so styled his master—"Exceellency," as you are aware, is the title an Italian would give to Satan if taking his wages,—'told me that *la petite* Marigny was no more, he had received previously a lady veiled and mantled, whom I did not recognize as any one I had seen before, but I noticed her way of carrying herself—haughtily—her head thrown back; and I thought to myself, that lady is one of his *grandes dames*. She did call again two or three times, never announcing her name; then she did not reappear. She might be Madame Duval—I can't say.'

"'But did you never hear his Excellency speak of the real Duval after that time?'

"'No—*non mi ricordo*—I don't remember.'

"'Nor of some living Madame Marigny, though the real one was dead?'

"'Stop, I do recollect; not that he ever named such a person to me, but that I have posted letters for him to a Madame Marigny—oh yes! even years after the said *petite* Marigny was dead; and once I did venture to say, "Pardon me, Eccellenza, but may I ask if that poor lady is really dead, since I have to prepay this letter to her?"'

"'Oh," said he, "Madame Marigny! Of course the one you know is dead, but there are others of the same name; this lady is of my family. Indeed, her house, though noble in itself, recognizes the representative of mine as its head, and I am too *bon prince* not to acknowledge and serve any one who branches out of my own tree."'

"A day after this last conversation on the subject, Leporello said to me: 'My friend, you certainly have some interest in ascertaining what became of the lady who took the name of Marigny.' (I state this frankly, Monsieur, to show how difficult even for one so prudent as I am to beat about a bush long but what you let people know the sort of bird you are in search of).

"'Well,' said I, 'she does interest me. I knew something of that Victor de Maulèon, whom his Excellency did not wish to quarrel with; and it would be a kindly act to her relation if one could learn what became of Louise Duval.'

"'I can put you on the way of learning all that his Excellency was likely to have known of her through correspondence. I have often-heard him quote, with praise, a saying so clever that it might have been Italian—"Never write, never burn," that is, never commit yourself by a letter—keep all letters that could put others in your power. All the letters he received were carefully kept and labelled. I sent them to his son in four large trunks. His son, no doubt, has them still.'

"Now, however, I have exhausted my budget. I arrived at Paris last night. I strongly advise you to come hither at once, if you still desire to prosecute your search.

"You, Monsieur, can do what I could not venture to do; you can ask the son of Don Juan if, amid the correspondence of his father, which he may have preserved, there be any signed Marigny or Duval—any, in short, which can throw light on this very obscure complication of circumstances. A *grand seigneur* would naturally be more complaisant to a man of your station than he would be to an agent of police. Don Juan's son, inheriting his father's title, is Monsieur le Marquis de Rochebriant; and permit me to add, that at this moment, as the journals doubtless inform you, all Paris resounds with the rumor of coming war; and Monsieur de Rochebriant—who is, as I have ascertained, now in Paris—it may be difficult to find anywhere on earth a month or two hence.—I have the honor, with profound consideration, etc., etc.,

"I. RENARD."

The day after the receipt of this letter Graham Vane was in Paris.

CHAPTER II.

Among things indescribable is that which is called "Agitation" in Paris — "Agitation" without riot or violence—showing itself by no disorderly act, no turbulent outburst. Perhaps the *cafés* are more crowded; passengers in the streets stop each other more often, and converse in small knots and groups; yet, on the whole, there is little externally to show how loudly the heart of Paris is beating. A traveller may be passing through quiet landscapes, unconscious that a great battle is going on some miles off, but if he will stop and put his ear to the ground he will recognize by a certain indescribable vibration, the voice of the cannon.

But at Paris an acute observer need not stop and put his ear to the ground; he feels within himself a vibration—a mysterious inward sympathy which communicates to the individual a conscious thrill—when the passions of the multitude are stirred, no matter how silently.

Tortoni's *café* was thronged when Duplessis and Frederic Lemercier entered it: it was in vain to order breakfast; no table was vacant either within the rooms or under the awnings without.

But they could not retreat so quickly as they had entered. On catching sight of the financier several men rose and gathered round him, eagerly questioning:—

"What do you think, Duplessis? Will any insult to France put a drop of warm blood into the frigid veins of that miserable Ollivier?"

"It is not yet clear that France has been insulted, Messieurs," replied Duplessis, phlegmatically.

"Bah! Not insulted! The very nomination of a Hohenzollern to the crown of Spain was an insult—what would you have more?"

"I tell you what it is, Duplessis," said the Vicomte de Brézé, whose habitual light good temper seemed exchanged for insolent swagger —"I tell you what it is, your friend the Emperor has no more courage than a chicken. He is grown old, and infim, and lazy; he knows that he can't even mount on horseback. But if, before this day week, he has not declared war on the Prussians, he will be lucky if he can get off as quietly as poor Louis Philippe did under shelter of his umbrella, and ticketed 'Schmidt.' Or could you not, M. Duplessis, send him back to London in a bill of exchange?"

"For a man of your literary repute, M. le Comte," said Duplessis, "you indulge in a strange confusion of metaphors. But, pardon me, I came here to breakfast, and I cannot remain to quarrel. Come, Lemercier, let us take our chance of a cutlet at the *Trois Frères.*"

"Fox, Fox," cried Lemercier, whistling to a poodle that had followed him into the *café*, and, frightened by the sudden movement and loud voices of the *habitués*, had taken refuge under the table.

"Your dog is *poltron*," said De Brézé; "call him Nap."

At this stroke of humor there was a general laugh, in the midst of which Duplessis escaped, and Frederic, having discovered and caught his dog, followed with that animal tenderly clasped in his arms. "I would not lose Fox for a great deal," said Lemercier with *effusion;* "a pledge of love and fidelity from an English lady the most distinguished: the lady left me, the dog remains."

Duplessis smiled grimly: "What a thoroughbred Parisian you are, my dear Frederic! I believe if the trump of the last angel were sounding, the Parisians would be divided into two sets: one would be singing the Marseillaise, and parading the red flag; the other would be shrugging their shoulders and saying, 'Bah! as if *le Bon Dieu* would have the bad taste to injure Paris—the seat of the Graces, the School of the Arts, the Fountain of Reason, the Eye of the World;' and so be found by the destroying angel caressing poodles and making *bons mots* about *les femmes.*"

"And quite right, too," said Lemercier, complacently; "what other people in the world could retain lightness of heart under circumstances so unpleasant? But why do you take things so solemnly? Of course there will be war—idle now to talk of explanations and excuses. When a Frenchman says, 'I am insulted,' he is not going to be told that he is not insulted. He means fighting, and not apologizing. But what if there be war? Our brave soldiers beat the Prussians—take the Rhine—return to Paris covered with laurels; a new *Boulevard de Berlin* eclipses the Boulevard Sebastopol. By the way, Duplessis, a Boulevard de Berlin will be a good speculation

—better than the Rue de Louvier. Ah! is not that my English friend, Grarm Varn?" here, quitting the arm of Duplessis, Lemercier stopped a gentleman who was about to pass him unnoticing. "*Bou jour, mon ami!* how long have you been at Paris?"

"I only arrived last evening," answered Graham, "and my stay may be so short that it is a piece of good luck, my dear Lemercier, to meet with you, and exchange a cordial shake of the hand."

"We are just going to breakfast at the *Trois Frères*—Duplessis and I—pray join us."

"With great pleasure—ah, M. Duplessis, I shall be glad to hear from you that the Emperor will be firm enough to check the advances of that martial fever which, to judge by the persons I meet, seems to threaten delirium."

Duplessis looked very keenly at Graham's face, as he replied slowly: "The English, at least, ought to know that when the Emperor by his last reforms resigned his personal authority for constitutional monarchy, it ceased to be a question whether he could or could not be firm in matters that belonged to the Cabinet and the Chambers. I presume that if Monsieur Gladstone advised Queen Victoria to declare war upon the Emperor of Russia, backed by a vast majority in Parliament, you would think me very ignorant of constitutional monarchy and Parliamentary government if I said, 'I hope Queen Victoria will resist that martial fever.'"

"You rebuke me very fairly, M. Duplessis, if you can show me that the two cases are analogous; but we do not understand in England that, despite his last reforms, the Emperor has so abnegated his individulal ascendancy, that his will, clearly and resolutely expressed, would not prevail in his Council and silence opposition in the Chambers. Is it so? I ask for information."

The three men were walking on towards the Palais Royal side by side while this conversation proceeded.

"That all depends," replied Duplessis, "upon what may be the increase of popular excitement at Paris. If it slackens, the Emperor, no doubt, could turn to wise account that favorable pause in the fever. Bad if it continues to swell, and Paris cries 'War,' in a voice as loud as it cried to Louis Philippe 'Revolution,' do you think that the Emperor could impose on his ministers the wisdom of Peace? His ministers would be too terrified by the clamor to undertake the responsibility of opposing it—they would resign. Where is the Emperor to find another Cabinet?—a peace Cabinet? What and who are the orators for peace?—what a handful!—who? Gambetta, Jules Favre, avowed Republicans,—would they even accept the post of ministers to Louis Napoléon? If they did, would not their first step be the abolition of the Empire? Napoléon is therefore so far a constitutional monarch in the same sense as Queen Victoria, that the popular will in the country (and in France in such matters, Paris is the country) controls the Chambers, controls the Cabinet; and against the Cabinet the Emperor could not contend. I say nothing of the army—a power in France unknown to you in England, which would certainly fraternize with no peace party. If war is proclaimed,—let England blame it if she will—she can't lament it more than I should: but let England blame the nation; let her blame, if she please, the form of the government, which rests upon popular suffrage; but do not let her blame our sovereign more than the French would blame her own, if compelled by the conditions on which she holds her crown to sign a declaration of war, which vast majorities in a Parliament just elected, and a Council of Ministers whom she could not practically replace, enforced upon her will."

"Your observations, M. Duplessis, impress me strongly, and add to the deep anxieties with which, in common with all my countrymen, I regard the menacing aspect of the present hour. Let us hope the best. Our Government, I know, is exerting itself to the utmost verge of its power, to remove every just ground of offence that the unfortunate nomination of a German Prince to the Spanish throne could not fail to have given to French statesmen."

"I am glad you concede that such a nomination was a just ground of offence," said Lemercier, rather bitterly; "for I have met Englishman who asserted that France had no right to resent any choice of a sovereign that Spain might make."

"Englishmen in general are not very reflective politicians in foreign affairs," said Graham; "but those who are, must see that France

could not, without alarm the most justifiable, contemplate a cordon of hostile states being drawn around her on all sides,—Germany, in itself so formidable since the field of Sadowa, on the east; a German prince in the south-west; the not improbable alliance between Prussia and the Italian kingdom already so alienated from the France to which it owed so much. If England would be uneasy were a great maritime power possessed of Antwerp, how much more uneasy might France justly be if Prussia could add the armies of Spain to those of Germany, and launch them both upon France. But that cause of alarm is over—the Hohenzollern is withdrawn. Let us hope for the best."

The three men had now seated themselves at a table in the *Trois Frères*, and Lemercier volunteered the task of inspecting the *menu* and ordering the repast, still keeping guard on Fox.

"Observe that man," said Duplessis, pointing towards a gentleman who had just entered; "the other day he was the popular hero—now, in the excitement of threatened war, he is permitted to order his *bifteck* uncongratulated, uncaressed; such is fame at Paris! here to-day and gone to-morrow."

"How did the man become famous?"

"He is a painter, and refused a decoration—the only French painter who ever did."

"And why refuse?"

"Because he is more stared at as the man who refused than he would have been as the man who accepted. If ever the Red Republicans have their day, those among them most certain of human condemnation will be the coxcombs who have gone mad from the desire of human applause."

"You are a profound philosopher, M. Duplessis."

"I hope not—I have an especial contempt for philosophers. Pardon me a moment—I see a man to whom I would say a word or two."

Duplessis crossed over to another table to speak to a middle-aged man of somewhat remarkable countenance, with the red ribbon in his button-hole, in whom Graham recognized an ex-minister of the Emperor, differing from most of those at that day in his Cabinet, in the reputation of being loyal to his master and courageous against a mob.

Left thus alone with Lemercier, Graham said—

"Pray tell me where I can find your friend the Marquis de Rochebriant. I called at his apartment this morning, and I was told that he had gone on some visit into the country, taking his valet, and the *concierge* could not give me his address. I thought myself so lucky on meeting with you, who are sure to know."

"No, I do not; it is some days since I saw Alain. But Duplessis will be sure to know." Here the financier rejoined them.

"*Mon cher*, Grarm Vane wants to know for what Sabine shades Rochebriant has deserted the '*fumum opes strepitumque*' of the capital."

"Ah! the Marquis is a friend of yours Monsieur?"

"I can scarcely boast that honor, but he is an acquaintance whom I should be very glad to see again."

"At this moment he is at the Duchesse de Tarascon's country-house near Fontainebleau; I had a hurried line from him two days ago stating that he was going there on her urgent invitation. But he may return to-morrow; at all events he dines with me on the 8th, and I shall be charmed if you will do me the honor to meet him at my house.

"It is an invitation too agreeable to refuse, and I thank you very much for it."

Nothing worth recording passed further in conversation between Graham and the two Frenchmen. He left them smoking their cigars in the garden, and walked homeward by the Rue de Rivoli. As he was passing beside the Magasin Du Louvre he stopped, and made way for a lady crossing quickly out of the shop towards her carriage at the door. Glancing at him with a slight inclination of her head in acknowledgment of his courtesy, the lady recognized his features—

"Ah, Mr. Vane!" she cried, almost joyfully, "You are then at Paris, though you have not come to see me."

"I only arrived last night, dear Mrs. Morley," said Graham, rather embarrassed, "and only on some matters of business which unexpectedly summoned me. My stay will probably be very short."

"In that case let me rob you of a few minutes—no, not rob you even of them; I can take you wherever you want to go, and as my carriage moves more quickly than you do on

foot, I shall save you the minutes instead of robbing you of them."

"You are most kind, but I was only going to my hotel, which is close by."

"Then you have no excuse for not taking a short drive with me in the Champs Elysées—come."

Thus bidden, Graham could not civilly disobey. He handed the fair American into her carriage, and seated himself by her side.

CHAPTER III.

"Mr. Vane, I feel as if I had many apologies to make for the interest in your life which my letter to you so indiscreetly betrayed."

"Oh, Mrs. Morley! you cannot guess how deeply that interest touched me."

"I should not have presumed so far," continued Mrs. Morley, unheeding the interruption, "if I had not been altogether in error as to the nature of your sentiments in a certain quarter. In this you must blame my American rearing. With us there are many flirtations between boys and girls which come to nothing; but when in my country a man like you meets with a woman like Mademoiselle Cicogna, there cannot be flirtation. His attentions, his looks, his manner, reveal to the eyes of those who care enough for him to watch, one of two things—either he coldly admires and esteems, or he loves with his whole heart and soul a woman worthy to inspire such a love. Well, I did watch, and I was absurdly mistaken. I imagined that I saw love, and rejoiced for the sake of both of you to think so. I know that in all countries, our own as well as yours, love is so morbidly sensitive and jealous that it is always apt to invent imaginary foes to itself. Esteem and admiration never do that. I thought that some misunderstanding, easily removed by the intervention of a third person, might have impeded the impulse of two hearts towards each other,—and so I wrote. I had assumed that you loved—I am humbled to the last degree—you only admired and esteemed."

"Your irony is very keen, Mrs. Morley, and to you it may seem very just."

"Don't call me Mrs. Morley in that haughty tone of voice,—can't you talk to me as you would talk to a friend? You only esteemed and admired—there is an end of it."

"No, there is not an end of it," cried Graham, giving way to an impetuosity of passion which rarely, indeed, before another, escaped his self-control; "the end of it to me is a life out of which is ever stricken such love as I could feel for woman. To me true love can only come once. It came with my first look on that fatal face—it has never left me in thought by day, in dreams by night. The end of it to me is farewell to all such happiness as the one love of a life can promise—but——"

"But what?" asked Mrs. Morley, softly, and very much moved by the passionate earnestness of Graham's voice and words.

"But," he continued with a forced smile, "we Englishmen are trained to the resistance of absolute authority; we cannot submit all the elements that make up our being to the sway of a single despot. Love is the painter of existence, it should not be its sculptor."

"I do not understand the metaphor."

"Love colors our life, it should not chisel its form."

"My dear Mr. Vane, that is very cleverly said, but the human heart is too large and too restless to be quietly packed up in an aphorism. Do you mean to tell me that if you found you had destroyed Isaura Cicogna's happiness as well as resigned your own, that thought would not somewhat deform the very shape you would give to your life? Is it color alone that your life would lose?"

"Ah, Mrs. Morley, do not lower your friend into an ordinary girl in whom idleness exaggerates the strength of any fancy over which it dreamily broods. Isaura Cicogna has her occupations — her genius — her fame — her career. Honestly speaking, I think that in these she will find a happiness that no quiet hearth could bestow. I will say no more. I feel persuaded that were we two united I could not make her happy. With the irresistible impulse that urges the genius of the writer towards its vent in public sympathy and applause, she would chafe if I said, 'Be contented to be wholly mine.' And if I said it not, and I felt I had no right to say it, and allowed the full scope to her natural ambition, what then? She would chafe yet more to find that I had no fellowship in her aims and ends—that where I should feel pride, I felt humili-

ation. It would be so; I cannot help it, 'tis my nature."

"So be it then. When, next year perhaps, you visit Paris, you will be safe from my officious interference—Isaura will be the wife of another."

Graham pressed his hand to his heart with the sudden movement of one who feels there an agonizing spasm—his cheek, his very lips were bloodless.

"I told you," he said bitterly, "that your fears of my influence over the happiness of one so gifted, and so strong in such gifts, were groundless; you allow that I should be very soon forgotten?"

"I allow no such thing—I wish I could. But do you know so little of a woman's heart (and in matters of heart I never yet heard that genius had a talisman against emotion),—do you know so little of a woman's heart as not to know that the very moment in which she may accept a marriage the least fitted to render her happy, is that in which she has lost all hope of happiness in another?"

"Is it indeed so?" murmured Graham—"ay, I can conceive it."

"And have you so little comprehension of the necessities which that fame, that career to which you allow she is impelled by the instincts of genius, impose on this girl, young, beautiful, fatherless, motherless? No matter how pure her life, can she guard it from the slander of envious tongues? Will not all her truest friends—would not you, if you were her brother—press upon her by all the arguments that have most weight with the woman who asserts independence in her modes of life, and yet is wise enough to know that the world can only judge of virtue by its shadow—reputation, not to dispense with the protection which a husband can alone secure? And that is why I warn you, if it be yet time, that in resigning your own happiness you may destroy Isaura's. She will wed another, but she will not be happy. What a chimera of dread your egotism as man conjures up. Oh! forsooth, the qualities that charm and delight a world are to unfit a woman to be helpmate to a man. Fie on you!—fie!"

Whatever answer Graham might have made to these impassioned reproaches was here checked.

Two men on horseback stopped the carriage. One was Enguerrand de Vandemar, the other was the Algerine Colonel whom we met at the supper given at the *Maison Dorée* by Frederic Lemercier.

"*Pardon*, Madame Morley," said Enguerrand; "but there are symptoms of a mob-epidemic a little further up; the fever began at Belleville, and is threatening the health of the Champs Elysées. Don't be alarmed—it may be nothing, though it may be much. In Paris, one can never calculate an hour beforehand the exact progress of a politico-epidemic fever. At present I say 'Bah! a pack of ragged boys, *gamins de Paris;*' but my friend the Colonel, twisting his *moustache en souriant amèrement*, says, 'It is the indignation of Paris at the apathy of the government under insult to the honor of France;' and Heaven only knows how rapidly French *gamins* grow into giants when colonels talk about the indignation of Paris and the honor of France!"

"But what has happened?" asked Mr. Morley, turning to the Colonel.

"Madame," replied the warrior, "it is rumored that the King of Prussia has turned his back upon the ambassador of France; and that the *pekin* who is for peace at any price—M. Ollivier—will say to-morrow in the Chamber, that France submits to a slap in the face."

"Please, Monsieur de Vandemar, to tell my coachman to drive home," said Mrs. Morley.

The carriage turned and went homeward. The Colonel lifted his hat and rode back to see what the *gamins* were about. Enguerrand, who had no interest in the *gamins*, and who looked on the Colonel as a bore, rode by the side of the carriage.

"Is there anything serious in this?" asked Mrs. Morley.

"At this moment, nothing. What it may be this hour to-morrow I cannot say. Ah! Monsieur Vane, *bon jour*—I did not recognize you at first. Once, in a visit at the *château* of one of your distinguished countrymen, I saw two game-cocks turned out facing each other; they needed no pretext for quarrelling—neither do France and Prussia—no matter which game-cock gave the first offence, the two game-cocks must have it out. All that Ollivier can do, if he be wise, is to see that the French cock has his steel spurs as long as the Prussians. But this I do say, that if Ollivier attempts to put the French cock back into its bag, the Empire

is gone in forty-eight hours. That to me is a trifle—I care nothing for the Empire; but that which is not a trifle is anarchy and chaos. Better war and the Empire than peace and Jules Favre. But let us seize the present hour, Mr. Vane; whatever happens to-morrow, shall we dine together to-day? Name your *restaurant*."

"I am so grieved," answered Graham, rousing himself—"I am here only on business, and engaged all the evening."

"What a wonderful thing is this life of ours!" said Enguerrand. "The destiny of France at this moment hangs on a thread—I, a Frenchman, say to an English friend, 'Let us dine—a cutlet to-day and a fig for to-morrow;' and my English friend, distinguished native of a country with which we have the closest alliance, tells me that in this crisis of France he has business to attend to! My father is quite right; he accepts the Voltairean philosophy, cries, *Vivent les indifférents!*"

"My dear M. de Vandemar," said Graham, "in every country you will find the same thing. All individuals massed together constitute public life. Each individual has a life of his own, the claims and the habits and the needs of which do not suppress his sympathies with public life, but imperiously overrule them. Mrs. Morley, permit me to pull the check-string—I get out here."

"I like that man," said Enguerrand, as he continued to ride by the fair American, "in language and *esprit* he is so French."

"I used to like him better than you can," answered Mrs. Morley, "but in prejudice and stupidity he is so English. And it seems you are disengaged, come and partake, *pot au feu*, with Frank and me."

"Charmed to do so," answered the cleverest and best bred of all Parisian *beaux garçons*, "but forgive me if I quit you soon. This poor France! *Entre nous*, I am very uneasy about the Parisian fever. I must run away after dinner to clubs and *cafés* to learn the last bulletins."

"We have nothing like that French Legitimist in the States," said the fair American to herself, "unless we should ever be so silly as to make Legitimists of the ruined gentlemen of the South."

Meanwhile Graham Vane went slowly back to his apartment. No false excuse had he made to Enguerrand; this evening was devoted to M. Renard, who told him little he had not known before; but his private life overruled his public, and all that night, he, professed politician, thought sleeplessly, not over the crisis to France, which might alter the conditions of Europe, but the talk of his private life of that intermeddling American woman.

CHAPTER IV.

THE next day, Wednesday, July 6th, commenced one of those eras in the world's history in which private life would vainly boast that it overrules Life Public. How many private lives does such a terrible time influence, absorb darken with sorrow, crush into graves?

It was the day when the Duc de Gramont uttered the fatal speech which determined the die between peace and war. No one not at Paris on that day can conceive the popular enthusiasm with which that speech was hailed—the greater because the war-like tone of it was not anticipated; because there had been a rumor amidst circles the best informed that a speech of pacific moderation was to be the result of the Imperial Council. Rapturous indeed were the applauses with which the sentences that breathed haughty defiance were hailed by the Assembly. The ladies in the tribune rose with one accord, waving their handerchiefs. Tall, stalwart, dark, with Roman features and lofty presence, the Minister of France seemed to say with Catiline in the fine tragedy: "Lo! where I stand, I am war!"

Paris had been hungering for some hero of the hour—the Duc de Gramont became at once raised to that eminence.

All the journals, save the very few which were friendly to peace, because hostile to the Emperor, resounded with praise, not only of the speech, but of the speaker. It is with a melancholy sense of amusement that one recalls now to mind those organs of public opinion—with what romantic fondness they dwelt on the personal graces of the man who had at last given voice to the chivalry of France—"The charming gravity of his countenance—the mysterious expression of his eye!"

As the crowd poured from the Chambers,

Victor de Mauléon and Savarin who had been among the listeners, encountered.

"No chance for my friends the Orleanists now," said Savarin. "You who mock at all parties are, I suppose, at heart for the Republican—small chance, too, for that."

"I do not agree with you. Violent impulses have quick reactions."

"But what reaction could shake the Emperor after he returns a conqueror, bringing in his pocket the left bank of the Rhine?"

"None—when he does that. Will he do it? Does he himself think he will do it? I doubt——"

"Doubt the French army against the Prussian?"

"Against the German people united—yes, very much."

"But war will disunite the German people. Bavaria will surely assist us—Hanover will rise against the spoliator—Austria at our first successes must shake off her present enforced neutrality?"

"You have not been in Germany, and I have. What yesterday was a Prussian army to-morrow will be a German population; far exceeding our own in numbers, in hardihood of body, in cultivated intellect, in military discipline. But talk of something else. How is my ex-editor—poor Gustave Rameau."

"Still very weak, but on the mend. You may have him back in his office soon."

"Impossible! even in his sick-bed his vanity was more vigorous than ever. He issued a war-song, which has gone the round of the war journals signed by his own name. He must have known very well that the name of such a Tyrtæus cannot reappear as the editor of '*Le Sens Commun*' that in launching his little firebrand he burned all vessels that could waft him back to the port he had quitted. But I daresay he has done well for his own interests; I doubt if '*Le Sens Commun*' can much longer hold its ground in the midst of the prevalent lunacy."

"What! it has lost subscribers?—gone off in sale already, since it declared for peace?"

"Of course it has; and after the article which, if I live over to-night, will appear to-morrow, I should wonder if it sell to cover the cost of the print and paper."

"Martyr to principle! I revere, but I do not envy thee."

"Martyrdom is not my ambition. If Louis Napoléon be defeated, what then? Perhaps *he* may be the martyr; and the Favres and Gambettas may roast their own eggs on the gridiron they heat for his majesty."

Here an English gentleman, who was the very able correspondent to a very eminent journal, and in that capacity had made acquaintance with De Mauléon, joined the two Frenchman; Savarin, however, after an exchange of salutations, went his way.

"May I ask a frank answer to a somewhat rude question, M. le Vicomte?" said the Englishmen. "Suppose that the Imperial Government had to-day given in their adhesion to the peace party, how long would it have been before their orators in the Chamber and their organs in the press would have said that France was governed by *poltrons?*"

"Probably for most of the twenty-four hours. But there are a few who are honest in their convictions; of that few I am one."

"And would have supported the Emperor and his Government?"

"No, Monsieur—I do not say that."

"Then the Emperor would have turned many friends into enemies, and no enemies into friends."

"Monsieur—you in England know that a party in opposition is not propitiated when the party in power steals its measures. Ha!—pardon me, who is that gentleman, evidently your countryman, whom I see yonder talking to the Secretary of your Embassy?"

"He,—Mr. Vane—Graham Vane. Do you not know him? He has been much in Paris, attached to our Embassy formerly; a clever man—much is expected from him."

"Ah! I think I have seen him before, but am not quite sure. Did you say Vane? I once knew a Monsieur Vane, a distinguished parliamentary orator."

"That gentleman is his son—would you like to be introduced to him?"

"Not to-day—I am in some hurry." Here Victor lifted his hat in parting salutation, and as he walked away cast at Graham another glance keen and scrutinizing. "I have seen that man before," he muttered, "where?—when?—can it be only a family likeness to the father? No, the features are different; the profile is—ha!—Mr. Lamb. Mr. Lamb—but why call himself by that name?—why dis-

guised?—what can he have to do with poor Louise? Bah—these are not questions I can think of now. This war—this war—can it yet be prevented? How it will prostrate all the plans my ambition so carefully schemed! Oh! at least if I were but in the *Chambre*. Perhaps I yet may be before the war is ended—the Clavignys have great interest in their department."

CHAPTER V.

GRAHAM had left a note with Rochebriant's *concierge* requesting an interview on the Marquis's return to Paris, and on the evening after the day just commemorated he received a line, saying that Alain had come back, and would be at home at nine o'clock. Graham found himself in the Breton's apartment punctually at the hour indicated.

Alain was in high spirits: he burst at once into enthusiastic exclamations on the virtual announcement of war.

"Congratulate me, *mon cher!*" he cried—"the news was a joyous surprise to me. Only so recently as yesterday morning I was under the gloomy apprehension that the Imperial Cabinet would continue to back Ollivier's craven declaration 'that France had not been affronted!' The Duchesse de Tarascon, at whose *campagne* I was a guest, is (as you doubtless know) very much in the confidence of the Tuileries. On the first signs of war, I wrote to her saying, that whatever the objections of my pride to enter the army as a private in time of peace, such objections ceased on the moment when all distinctions of France must vanish in the eyes of sons eager to defend her banners. The Duchesse in reply begged me to come to her *campagne* and talk over the matter. I went; she then said that if war should break out it was the intention to organize the *Mobiles* and officer them with men of birth and education, irrespective of previous military service, and in that case I might count on my epaulets. But only two nights ago she received a letter—I know not of course from whom—evidently from some high authority—that induced her to think the moderation of the Council would avert the war, and leave the swords of the *Mobiles* in their sheaths. I suspect the decision of yesterday must have been a very sudden one. *Ce cher Gramont!* See what it is to have a well-born man in a sovereign's councils."

"If war must come, I at least wish all renown to yourself. But——"

"Oh! spare me your '*buts;*' the English are always too full of them where her own interests do not appeal to her. She had no 'buts' for war in India or a march into Abyssinia."

Alain spoke petulantly; at that moment the French were very much irritated by the monitory tone of the English journals. Graham prudently avoided the chance of rousing the wrath of a young hero yearning for his epaulets.

"I am English enough," said he, with good-humored courtesy, "to care for English interests; and England has no interest abroad dearer to her than the welfare and dignity of France. And now let me tell you why I presumed on an acquaintance less intimate than I could desire, to solicit this interview on a matter which concerns myself, and in which you could perhaps render me a considerable service."

"If I can, count it rendered; move to this sofa—join me in a cigar, and let us talk at ease *comme de vieux amis*, whose fathers or brothers might have fought side by side in the Crimea." Graham removed to the sofa beside Rochebriant, and after one or two whiffs laid aside the cigar and began:

"Among the correspondence which Monsieur your father has left, are there any letters of no distant date signed Marigny—Madame Marigny? Pardon me, I should state my motive in putting this question. I am intrusted with a charge, the fulfilment of which may prove to the benefit of this lady or her child; such fulfilment is a task imposed upon my honor. But all the researches to discover this lady which I have instituted stop at a certain date, with this information,—viz., that she corresponded occasionally with the late Marquis de Rochebriant; that he habitually preserved the letters of his correspondents; and that these letters were severally transmitted to you at his decease."

Alain's face had taken a very grave expression while Graham spoke, and he now replied with a mixture of haughtiness and embarrassment:

"The boxes containing the letters my father received and preserved were sent to me as you say—the larger portion of them were from ladies—sorted and labelled, so that in glancing at any letter in each packet I could judge of the general tenor of these in the same packet without the necessity of reading them. All packets of that kind, Monsieur Vane, I burned. I do not remember any letters signed 'Marigny.'"

"I perfectly understand, my dear Marquis, that you would destroy all letters which your father himself would have destroyed if his last illness had been sufficiently prolonged. But I do not think the letters I mean would have come under that classification; probably they were short, and on matters of business relating to some third person—some person, for instance, of the name of Louise, or of Duval!"

"Stop! let me think. I have a vague remembrance of one or two letters which rather perplexed me, they were labelled 'Louise D——. Mem.: to make further inquiries as to the fate of her uncle.'"

"Marquis, these are the letters I seek. Thank heaven, you have not destroyed them?"

"No; there was no reason why I should destroy, though I really cannot state precisely any reason why I kept them. I have a very vague recollection of their existence."

"I entreat you to allow me at least a glance at the handwriting, and compare it with that of a letter I have about me; and if the several handwritings correspond, I would ask you to let me have the address, which, according to your father's memorandum, will be found in the letters you have preserved."

"To compliance with such a request I not only cannot demur, but perhaps it may free me from some responsiblity which I might have thought the letters devolved upon my executorship. I am sure they did not concern the honor of any woman of any family, for in that case I *must* have burned them."

"Ah, Marquis, shake hands there! In such concord between man and man, there is more *entente cordiale* between England and France than there was at Sebastopol. Now let me compare the handwritings."

"The box that contained the letters is not here—I left it at Rochebriant; I will telegraph to my aunt to send it; the day after to-morrow it will no doubt arrive. Breakfast with me that day—say at one o'clock, and after breakfast the Box!"

"How can I thank you?"

"Thank me! but you said your honor was concerned in your request—requests affecting honor between men *comme il faut* is a ceremony of course, like a bow between them. One bows, the other returns the bow—no thanks on either side. Now that we have done with that matter, let me say that I thought your wish for our interview originated in a very different cause.

"What could that be?"

"Nay, do you not recollect that last talk between us, when with such loyalty you spoke to me about Mademoiselle Cicogna, and supposing that there might be rivalship between us, retracted all that you might have before said to warn me against fostering the sentiment with which she had inspired me; even at the first slight glance of a face which cannot be lightly forgotten by those who have once seen it."

"I recollect perfectly every word of that talk, Marquis," answered Graham, calmly, but with his hand concealed within his vest and pressed tightly to his heart. The warning of Mrs. Morley flashed upon him. "Was this the man to seize the prize he had put aside—this man, younger than himself—handsomer than himself—higher in rank?"

"I recollect that talk, Marquis! Well, what then?"

"In my self-conceit I supposed that you might have heard how much I admired Mademoiselle Cicogna—how, having not long since met her at the house of Duplessis (who by the way writes me word that I shall meet you *chez lui* to-morrow), I have since sought her society wherever there was a chance to find it. You may have heard, at our club or elsewhere, how I adore her genius—how, I say, that nothing so *Breton*—that is, so pure and so lofty—has appeared and won readers since the days of Châteaubriand—and you, knowing that *les absens ont toujours tort*, come to me and ask Monsieur de Rochebriant, Are we rivals? I expected a challenge—you relieve my mind—you abandon the field to me?"

At the first I warned the reader how improved from his old *mauvaise honte* a year or so of Paris life would make our *beau Marquis*. How a year or two of London life with its

horsey slang and its fast girls of the period would have vulgarized an English Rochebriant! Graham gnawed his lips and replied quietly, "I do not challenge! Am I to congratulalate you?"

"No, that brilliant victory is not for me. I thought that was made clear in the conversation I have referred to. But if you have done me the honor to be jealous, I am exceedingly flattered. Speaking seriously, if I admired Mademoiselle Cicogna when you and I last met, the admiration is increased by the respect with which I regard a character so simply noble. How many women older than she would have been spoiled by the adulation that has followed her literary success!—how few women so young, placed in a position so critical, having the courage to lead a life so independent, would have maintained the dignity of their character free from a single indiscretion! I speak not from my own knowledge, but from the report of all, who would be pleased enough to censure if they could find a cause. Good society is the paradise of *mauvaises langues*."

Graham caught Alain's hand and pressed it, but made no answer.

The young Marquis continued:

"You will pardon me for speaking thus freely in the way that I would wish any friend to speak of the *demoiselle* who might become my wife. I owe you much, not only for the loyalty with which you addressed me in reference to this young lady, but for words affecting my own position in France, which sank deep into my mind—saved me from deeming myself a *proscrit* in my own land—filled me with a manly ambition, not stifled amidst the thick of many effeminate follies—and, in fact, led me to the career which is about to open before me and in which my ancestors have left me no undistinguished examples. Let us speak, then, *à cœur ouvert*, as one friend to another. Has there been any misunderstanding between you and Mademoiselle Cicogna which has delayed your return to Paris? If so, is it over now?"

"There has been no such misunderstanding."

"Do you doubt whether the sentiments you expressed in regard to her, when we met last year, are returned?"

"I have no right to conjecture her sentiments. You mistake altogether."

"I do not believe that I am dunce enough to mistake your feelings towards Mademoiselle—they may be read in your face at this moment. Of course I do not presume to hazard a conjecture as to those of Mademoiselle towards yourself. But when I met her not long since at the house of Duplessis, with whose daughter she is intimate, I chanced to speak to her of you; and if I may judge, by looks and manner, I chose no displeasing theme. You turn away—I offend you?"

"Offend!—no, indeed; but on this snbject I am not prepared to converse. I came to Paris on matters of business much complicated and which ought to absorb my attention. I cannot longer trespass on your evening. The day after to-morrow, then, I will be with you at one o'clock."

"Yes, I hope then to have the letters you wish to consult; and meanwhile, we meet to-morrow at the Hôtel Duplessis."

CHAPTER VI.

GRAHAM had scarcely quitted Alain, and the young Marquis was about to saunter forth to his club, when Duplessis was announced.

These two men had naturally seen much of each other since Duplessis had returned from Bretagne and delivered Alain from the gripe of Louvier. Scarcely a day had passed but what Alain had been summoned to enter into the financier's plans for the aggrandizement of the Rochebriant estates, and delicately made to feel that he had become a partner in speculations, which, thanks to the capital and the abilities of Duplessis brought to bear, seemed likely to result in the ultimate freedom of his property from all burdens, and the restoration of his inheritance to a splendor correspondent with the dignity of his rank.

On the plea that his mornings were chiefly devoted to professional business, Duplessis arranged that these consultations should take place in the evenings. From those consultations Valérie was not banished; Duplessis took her into the council as a matter of course. "Valérie," said the financier to Alain, "though so young, has a very clear head for business, and she is so interested in all that interests

myself, that even where I do not take her opinion, I at least feel my own made livelier and brighter by her sympathy."

So the girl was in the habit of taking her work or her book into the *cabinet de travail*, and never obtruding a suggestion unasked, still, when appealed to, speaking with a modest good sense which justified her father's confidence and praise; and *à propos* of her book, she had taken Châteaubriand into peculiar favor. Alain had respectfully presented to her beautifully bound copies of "Atala," and "Le Génie du Christianisme;" it is astonishing, indeed, how he had already contrived to regulate her tastes in literature. The charms of those quiet family evenings had stolen into into the young Breton's heart.

He yearned for none of the gayer reunions in which he had before sought for a pleasure that his nature had not found; for, amidst the amusements of Paris Alain remained intensely Breton—viz., formed eminently for the simple joys of domestic life, associating the sacred hearthstone with the antique religion of his fathers; gathering round it all the images of pure and noble affections which the romance of a poetic temperament had evoked from the solitude which had surrounded a melancholy boyhood—an uncontaminated youth.

Duplessis entered abruptly, and with a countenance much disturbed from its wonted saturnine composure.

"Marquis, what is this I have just heard from the Duchesse de Tarascon? Can it be? You ask military service in this ill-omened war?—you?"

"My dear and best friend," said Alain, very much startled, "I should have thought that you, of all men in the world, would have most approved of my request—you, so devoted an Imperialist—you, indignant that the representative of one of these families, which the first Napoléon so eagerly and so vainly courted, should ask for the grade of sous-lieutenant in the armies of Napoléon the Third—you, who of all men know now ruined are the fortunes of a Rochebriant—you, feel surprised that he clings to the noblest heritage his ancestors have left to him—their sword! I do not understand you."

"Marquis," said Duplessis, seating himself, and regarding Alain with a look in which were blended the sort of admiration and the sort of contempt with which a practical man of the world, who, having himself gone through certain credulous follies, has learned to despise the follies, but retains a reminiscence of sympathy with the fools they bewitch,—"Marquis, pardon me; you talk finely, but you do not talk common sense. I should be extremely pleased if your legitimate scruples had allowed you to solicit, or rather to accept, a civil appointment not unsuited to your rank, under the ablest sovereign, as a civilian, to whom France can look for rational liberty combined with established order. Such openings to a suitable career you have rejected; but who on earth could expect you, never trained to military service, to draw a sword hitherto sacred to the Bourbons, on behalf of a cause which the madness, I do not say of France but of Paris, has enforced on a sovereign against whom you would fight to-morrow if you had a chance of placing the descendent of Henry IV. on his throne."

"I am not about to fight for any sovereign, but for my country against the foreigner."

"An excellent answer if the foreigner had invaded your country; but it seems that your country is going to invade the foreigner—a very different thing. *Chut!* all this discussion is most painful to me. I feel for the Emperor a personal loyalty, and for the hazards he is about to encounter a prophetic dread, as an ancestor of yours might have felt for Francis I. could he have foreseen Pavia. Let us talk of ourselves and the effect the war should have upon our individual action. You are aware, of course, that, though M. Louvier has had notice of our intention to pay off his mortgagee, that intention cannot be carried into effect for six months; if the money be not then forthcoming his hold on Rochebriant remains unshaken—the sum is large."

"Alas! yes."

"The war must greatly disturb the money-market, affect many speculative adventures and operations when at the very moment credit may be most needed. It is absolutely necessary that I should be daily at my post on the Bourse, and hourly watch the ebb and flow of events. Under these circumstances I had counted, permit me to count still, on your presence in Bretagne. We have already begun negotiations on a somewhat extensive scale, whether as regards the improvement of forests

and orchards, or the plans for building allotments, as soon as the lands are free for disposal—for all these the eye of a master is required. I entreat you, then, to take up your residence at Rochebriant."

"My dear friend, this is but a kindly and delicate mode of relieving me from the dangers of war. I have, as you must be conscious, no practical knowledge of business. Hébert can be implicitly trusted, and will carry out your views with a zeal equal to mine, and with infinitely more ability."

"Marquis, pray neither to Hercules nor to Hébert; if you wish to get your own cart out of the ruts, put your own shoulder to the wheel."

Alain colored high, unaccustomed to be so bluntly addressed, but he replied with a kind of dignified meekness:

"I shall ever remain grateful for what you have done, and wish to do for me. But, assuming that you suppose rightly, the estates of Rochebriant would, in your hands, become a profitable investment, and more than redeem the mortgage, and the sum you have paid Louvier on my account, let it pass to you irrespectively of me. I shall console myself in the knowledge that the old place will be restored, and those who honored its old owners prosper in hands so strong, guided by a heart so generous."

Duplessis was deeply affected by these simple words; they seized him on the tenderest side of his character—for his heart was generous, and no one, except his lost wife and his loving child, had ever before discovered it to be so. Has it ever happened to you, reader, to be appreciated on the one point of the good or the great that is in you—on which secretly you value yourself most—but for which nobody, not admitted into your heart of hearts, has given you credit? If that has happened to you, judge what Duplessis felt when the fittest representative of that divine chivalry which, if sometimes deficient in head, owes all that exalts it to riches of heart, spoke thus to the professional money-maker, whose qualities of head were so acknowledged that a compliment to them would be a hollow impertinence, and whose qualities of heart had never yet received a compliment!

Duplessis started from his seat and embraced Alain, murmuring, "Listen to me, I love you—I never had a son—be mine—Rochebriant shall be my daughter's *dot*."

Alain returned the embrace, and then recoiling, said:—

"Father, your first desire must be honor for your son. You have guessed my secret—I have learned to love Valérie. Seeing her out in the world, she seemed like other girls, fair and commonplace—seeing her at your house, I have said to myself, 'There is the one girl fairer than all others in my eyes, and the one individual to whom all other girls are commonplace.'"

"Is that true?—is it?"

"True! does a *gentilhomme* ever lie? And out of that love for her has grown this immovable desire to be something worthy of her—something that may lift me from the vulgar platform of men who owe all to ancestors, nothing to themselves. Do you suppose for one moment that I, saved from ruin and penury by Valérie's father, could be base enough to say to her, 'In return be Madame la Marquise de Rochebriant?' Do you suppose that I, whom you would love and respect as son, could come to you and say: "I am oppressed by your favors—I am crippled with debts—give me your millions and we are quits?" No, Duplessis! You, so well descended yourself—so superior as man amongst men that you would have won name and position had you been born the son of a shoeblack,—you would eternally despise the noble who, in days when all that we Bretons deem holy in *noblesse* are subjected to ridicule and contempt, should so vilely forget the only motto which the scutcheons of all *gentilshommes* have in common, '*Noblesse oblige*.' War, with all its perils and all its grandeur,—war lifts on high the banners of France,—war, in which every ancestor of mine whom I care to recall aggrandized the name that descends to me. Let me then do as those before me have done; let me prove that I am worth something in myself, and then you and I are equals; and I can say with no humbled crest, 'Your benefits are accepted:' the man who has fought not ignobly for France may aspire to the hand of her daughter. Give me Valérie; as to her *dot*,—be it so, Rochebriant,—it will pass to her children."

"Alain! Alain! my friend! my son!—but if you fall?"

"Valérie will give you a nobler son."

Duplessis moved away, sighing heavily; but he said no more in deprecation of Alain's martial resolves.

A Frenchman, however practical, however worldly, however philosophical he may be, who does not sympathize with the follies of honor—who does not concede indulgence to the hot blood of youth when he says, "My country is insulted and her banner is unfurled," may certainly be a man of excellent common-sense; but if such men had been in the majority, Gaul would never have been France—Gaul would have been a province of Germany.

And as Duplessis walked homeward—he the calmest and most farseeing of all authorities on the Bourse—the man who, excepting only De Mauléon, most decidedly deemed the cause of the war a blunder, and most forebodingly anticipated its issues, caught the prevalent enthusiasm. Everywhere he was stopped by cordial hands, everywhere met by congratulating smiles. "How right you have been, Duplessis, when you have laughed at those who have said, 'The Emperor is ill, decrepit, done up.'"

"*Vive l'Empereur!* at last we shall be face to face with those insolent Prussians!"

Before he arrived at his home, passing along the Boulevards, greeted by all the groups enjoying the cool night air before the *cafés*, Duplessis had caught the war epidemic.

Entering his hotel, he went at once to Valérie's chamber. "Sleep well to-night, child; Alain has told me that he adores thee, and if he will go to the war, it is that he may lay his laurels at thy feet. Bless thee, my child, thou couldst not have made a nobler choice."

Whether, after these words, Valérie slept well or not 'tis not for me to say; but if she did sleep, I venture to guess that her dreams were rose-colored.

CHAPTER VII.

All the earlier part of that next day, Graham Vane remained indoors—a lovely day at Paris that 8th of July, and with that summer day all hearts at Paris were in unison. Discontent was charmed into enthusiasm—Belleville and Montmartre forgot the visions of Communism and Socialism and other "isms" not to be realized except in some undiscovered Atlantis!

The Emperor was the idol of the day—the names of Jules Favre and Gambetta were by-words of scorn. Even Armand Monnier, still out of work, beginning to feel the pinch of want, and fierce for any revolution that might turn topsy-turvy the conditions of labor,—even Armand Monnier was found among groups that were laying *immortelles* at the foot of the column in the Place Vendôme, and heard to say to a fellow-malcontent, with eyes uplifted to the statute of the first Napoleon, "Do you not feel at this moment that no Frenchman can be long angry with the little corporal? He denied *La Liberté*, but he gave *La Gloire*."

Heeding not the stir of the world without, Graham was compelling into one resolve the doubts and scruples which had so long warred against the heart which they ravaged, but could not wholly subdue.

The conversations with Mrs. Morley and Rochebriant had placed in a light in which he had not before regarded it, the image of Isaura.

He had reasoned from the starting-point of his love for her, and had sought to convince himself that against that love it was his duty to strive.

But now a new question was addressed to his conscience as well as to his heart. What though he had never formally declared to her his affection—never, in open words, wooed her as his own—never even hinted to her the hopes of a union which at one time he had fondly entertained,—still was it true that his love had been too transparent not to be detected by her, and not to have led her on to return it?

Certainly he had, as we know, divined that he was not indifferent to her: at Enghien, a year ago, that he had gained her esteem, and perhaps interested her fancy.

We know also how he had tried to persuade himself that the artistic temperament, especially when developed in women, is too elastic to suffer the things of real life to have lasting influence over happiness or sorrow,—that in the pursuits in which her thought and imagination found employ, in the excitement they

sustained, and the fame to which they conduced, Isaura would be readily consoled for a momentary pang of disappointed affection. And that a man so alien as himself, both by nature and by habit, from the artistic world, was the very last person who could maintain deep and permanent impression on her actual life or her ideal dreams. But what if, as he gathered from the words of the fair American —what if, in all these assumptions, he was wholly mistaken? What if, in previously revealing his own heart, he had decoyed hers—what if, by a desertion she had no right to anticipate, he had blighted her future? What if this brilliant child of genius could love as warmly, as deeply, as enduringly as any simple village girl to whom there is no poetry except love? If this were so—what became the first claim on his honor, his conscience, his duty?

The force which but a few days ago his reasonings had given to the arguments that forbade him to think of Isaura, became weaker and weaker, as now in an altered mood of reflection he re-summoned and re-weighed them.

All those prejudices—which had seemed to him such rational common-sense truths, when translated from his own mind into the words of Lady Janet's letter,—was not Mrs. Morley right in denouncing *them* as the crotchets of an insolent egotism? Was it not rather to the favor than to the disparagement of Isaura, regarded even in the man's narrow-minded view of woman's dignity, that this orphan girl could, with character so unscathed, pass through the trying ordeal of the public babble, the public gaze—command alike the esteem of a woman so pure as Mrs. Morley, the reverence of a man so chivalrously sensitive to honor as Alain de Rochebriant?

Musing thus, Graham's countenance at last brightened—a glorious joy entered into and possessed him. He felt as a man who had burst asunder the swathes and trammels which had kept him galled and miserable with the sense of captivity, and from which some wizard spell that took strength from his own superstition had forbidden to struggle.

He was free!—and that freedom was rapture! —yes, his resolve was taken.

The day was now far advanced. He should have just time before the dinner with Duplessis to drive to A——, where he still supposed Isaura resided. How, as his *fiacre* rolled along the well-remembered road—how completely he lived in that world of romance of which he denied himself to be a denizen.

Arrived at the little villa, he found it occupied only by workmen—it was under repair. No one could tell him to what residence the ladies who occupied it the last year had removed.

"I shall learn from Mrs. Morley," thought Graham, and at her house he called in going back, but Mrs. Morley was not at home; he had only just time, after regaining his apartment, to change his dress for the dinner to which he was invited. As it was, he arrived late, and while apologizing to his host for his want of punctuality, his tongue faltered. At the father end of the room he saw a face, paler and thinner than when he had seen it last—a face across which a something of grief had gone.

The servant announced that dinner was served.

"Mr. Vane," said Duplessis "will you take into dinner Mademoiselle Cicogna?"

BOOK ELEVENTH.

CHAPTER I.

Among the frets and checks to the course that "never did run smooth," there is one which is sufficiently frequent, for many a reader will remember the irritation it caused him. You have counted on a meeting with the beloved one unwitnessed by others, an interchange of confessions and vows which others may not hear. You have arranged almost the words in which your innermost heart is to be expressed; pictured to yourself the very looks by which those words will have their sweetest reply. The scene you have thus imagined appears to you vivid and distinct, as if foreshown in a magic glass. And suddenly, after long absence, the meeting takes place in the midst of a common companionship: nothing that you wished to say can be said. The scene you pictured is painted out by the irony of Chance; and groups and backgrounds of which you never dreamed, start forth from the disappointing canvas. Happy if that be all! But sometimes, by a strange, subtle intuition, you feel that the person herself is changed; and sympathetic with that change, a terrible chill comes over your own heart.

Before Graham had taken his seat at the table beside Isaura, he felt that she was changed to him. He felt it by her very touch as their hands met at the first greeting,—by the tone of her voice in the few words that passed between them,—by the absence of all glow in the smile which had once lit up her face, as a burst of sunshine lights up a day in spring, and gives a richer gladness of color to all its blooms. Once seated side by side they remained for some moments silent. Indeed it would have been rather difficult for anything less than the wonderful intelligence of lovers between whom no wall can prevent the stolen interchange of tokens, to have ventured private talk of their own amid the excited converse which seemed all eyes, all tongues, all ears, admitting no one present to abstract himself from the common emotion. Englishmen do not recognize the old classic law which limited the number of guests, where banquets are meant to be pleasant, to that of the Nine Muses. They invite guests so numerous, and so shy of launching talk across the table, that you may talk to the person next to you not less secure from listeners than you would be in talking with the stranger whom you met at a well in the Sahara. It is not so, except on state occasions, at Paris. Difficult there to retire into solitude with your next neighbor. The guests collected by Duplessis completed with himself the number of the Sacred Nine—the host, Valérie, Rochebriant, Graham, Isaura, Signora Venosta, La Duceesse de Tarascon, the wealthy and high-born Imperialist, Prince——, and last and least, one who shall be nameless.

I have read somewhere, perhaps in one of the books which American supersition dedicates to the mysteries of Spiritualism, how a gifted seer, technically styled medium, sees at the opera a box which to other eyes appears untenanted and empty, but to him is full of ghosts, well dressed in *tenue exacte*, gazing on the boards and listening to the music. Like such ghosts are certain beings whom I call Lookers-on. Though still living, they have no share in the life they survey, they come as from another world to hear and to see what is passing in ours. In ours they lived once, but that troubled sort of life they have survived. Still we amuse them as stage-players and puppets amuse ourselves. One of these Lookers-on completed the party at the house of Duplessis.

How lively, how animated the talk was at

the financier's pleasant table that day, the 8th of July! The excitement of the coming war made itself loud in every Gallic voice, and kindled in every Gallic eye. Appeals at every second minute were made, sometimes courteous, sometimes sarcastic, to the Englishman —promising son of an eminent statesman, and native of a country in which France is always coveting an alley, and always suspecting an enemy. Certainly Graham could not have found a less propitious moment for asking Isaura if she really *were* changed. And certainly the honor of Great Britain was never less ably represented (that is saying a great deal) than it was on this occasion by the young man reared to diplomacy and aspiring to Parliamentary distinction. He answered all questions with a constrained voice and an insipid smile,—all questions pointedly addressed to him as to what demonstrations of admiring sympathy with the gallantly of France might be expected from the English Government and people; what his acquaintance with the German races led him to suppose would be the effect on the Southern States of the first defeat of the Prussians; whether the man called Moltke was not a mere strategist on paper, a crotchety pedant; whether, if Belgium became so enamoured of the glories of France as to solicit fusion with her people, England would have a right to offer any objection,—etc. etc. I do not think that during that festival Graham once thought one-millionth so much about the fates of Prussia and France as he did think, "Why is that girl so changed to me? Merciful heaven! is she lost to my life?"

By training, by habit, even by passion, the man was a genuine politician, cosmopolitan as well as patriotic, accustomed to consider what effect every vibration in that balance of European power, which no deep thinker can despise, must have on the destinies of civilized humanity, and on those of the nation to which he belongs. But are there not moments in life when the human heart suddenly narrows the circumference to which its emotions are extended? As the ebb of a tide, it retreats from the shores it had covered on its flow, drawing on with contracted waves the treasure-trove it has selected to hoard amid its deeps.

CHAPTER II.

On quitting the dining-room, the Duchesse de Tarascon said to her host, on whose arm she was leaning, "Of course you and I must go with the stream. But is not all the fine talk that has passed to-day at your table, and in which we too have joined, a sort of hypocrisy? I may say this to you; I would say it to no other."

"And I say to you, Madame la Duchesse, that which I would say to no other. Thinking over it as I sit alone, I find myself making a 'terrible hazard;' but when I go abroad and become infected by the general enthusiasm, I pluck up gaiety of spirit, and whisper to myself, 'True, but it may be an enormous gain.' To get the left bank of the Rhine is a trifle; but to check in our next neighbor a growth which a few years hence would overtop us,—that is no trifle. And, be the gain worth the hazard or not, could the Emperor, could any Government likely to hold its own for a week, have declined to take the chance of the die?"

The Duchesse mused a moment, and meanwhile the two seated themselves on a divan in the corner of the *salon*. Then she said very slowly—

"No Government that held its tenure on popular suffrage could have done so. But if the Emperor had retained the personal authority which once allowed the intellect of one man to control and direct the passions of many, I think the war would have been averted. I have reason to know that the Emperor and most of the members of the Council were anxious to avoid the step which was forced upon them by the temper of the Chamber, and reports of a popular excitement which could not be resisted without eminent danger of revolution. It is Paris that has forced the war on the Emperor. But enough of this subject. What must be, must, and, as you say, the gain may be greater than the hazard. I come to something else you whispered to me before we went into dinner,—a sort of complaint which wounds me sensibly. You say I had assisted to a choice of danger and possibly of death a very distant connection of mine, who might have been a very near connection of yours. You mean Alain de Rochebriant?"

"Yes; I accept him as a suitor for the hand of my only daughter."

"I am so glad, not for your sake so much as for his. No one can know him well without appreciating in him the finest qualities of the finest order of the French noble; but having known your pretty Valérie so long, my congratulations are for the man who can win her. Meanwhile, hear my explanation: when I promised Alain any interest I can command for the grade of officer in a regiment of Mobiles, I knew not that he had formed, or was likely to form, ties or duties to keep him at home. I withdraw my promise."

"No, Duchesse, fulfil it. I should be disloyal indeed if I robbed a sovereign under whose tranquil and prosperous reign I have acquired, with no dishonor, the fortune which Order proffers to Commerce, of one gallant defender in the hour of need. And speaking frankly, if Alain were really my son, I think I am Frenchman enough to remember that France is my mother."

"Say no more, my friend—say no more," cried the Duchesse, with the warm blood of the heart rushing through all the delicate coatings of pearl-powder. "If every Frenchman felt as you do; if in this Paris of ours all hostilities of class may merge in the one thought of the common country; if in French hearts there yet thrill the same sentiment as that which, in the terrible days when all other ties were rent assunder, revered France as mother, and rallied her sons to her aid against the confederacy of Europe,—why, then, we need not grow pale with dismay at the sight of a Prussian needle-gun. Hist! look yonder: is not that a tableau of youth in Arcady? Worlds rage around, and Love, unconcerned, whispers to Love!" The Duchesse here pointed to a corner of the adjoining room in which Alain and Valérie sat apart, he whispering into her ear: her cheek downcast, and even seen at that distance brightened by the delicate tenderness of its blushes.

CHAPTER III.

But in that small assembly there were two who did not attract the notice of Duplessis, or of the lady of the Imperial Court. While the Prince——and the placid Looker-on were engaged at a contest of *écarté*, with the lively Venosta, for the gallery, interposing criticisms and admonitions, Isaura was listlessly turning over a collection of photographs, strewed on a table that stood near to an open window in the remoter angle of the room, communicating with a long and wide balcony filled partially with flowers and overlooking the Champs Elysées, softly lit up by the innumerable summer stars. Suddenly a whisper, the command of which she could not resist, thrilled through her ear, and sent the blood rushing back to her heart.

"Do you remember that evening at Enghien? how I said that our imagination could not carry us beyond the question whether we two should be gazing together that night twelve months on that star which each of us had singled out from the hosts of heaven? That was the 8th of July. It is the 8th of July once more. Come and seek for our chosen star—come. I have something to say, which say I must. Come."

Mechanically, as it were,—mechanically, as they tell us the Somnambulist obeys the Mesmeriser,—Isaura obeyed that summons. In a kind of dreamy submission she followed his steps, and found herself on the balcony, flowers around her and stars above, by the side of the man who had been to her that being ever surrounded by flowers and lighted by stars,—the ideal of Romance to the heart of virgin Woman.

"Isaura," said the Englishman, softly. At the sound of her own name for the first time heard from those lips, every nerve in her frame quivered. "Isaura, I have tried to live without you. I cannot. You are all in all to me: without you it seems to me as if earth had no flowers and even heaven had withdrawn its stars. Are there differences between us, differences of taste, of sentiments, of habits, of thought? Only let me hope that you can love me a tenth part so much as I love you, and such differences cease to be discord. Love harmonizes all sounds, blends all colors into its own divine oneness of heart and soul. Look up! is not the star which this time last year invited our gaze above, is it not still there? Does it not still invite our gaze? Isaura, speak!"

"Hush, hush, hush,"—the girl could say no more, but she recoiled from his side.

The recoil did not wound him: there was no hate in it. He advanced, he caught her hand, and continued, in one of those voices which became so musical in summer nights under starry skies—

"Isaura, there is one name which I can never utter without a reverence due to the religion which binds earth to Heaven—a name which to man should be the symbol of life cheered and beautified, exalted, hallowed. That name is 'wife.' Will you take that name from me?"

And still Isaura made no reply. She stood mute, and cold, and rigid as a statue of marble. At length, as if consciousness had been arrested and was struggling back, she sighed heavily, and passed her hands slowly over her forehead.

"Mockery, mockery," she said then, with a smile half bitter, half plaintive, on her colorless lips. "Did you wait to ask me that question till you knew what my answer must be? I have pledged the name of wife to another."

"No, no; you say that to rebuke, to punish me! Unsay it! unsay it!"

Isaura beheld the anguish of his face with bewildered eyes. "How can my words pain you?" she said, drearily. "Did you not write that I had unfitted myself to be wife to you?"

"I?"

"That I had left behind me the peaceful immunities of private life? I felt you were so right! Yes! I am affianced to one who thinks that in spite of that misfortune——"

"Stop, I command you—stop! You saw my letter to Mrs. Morley. I have not had one moment free from torture and remorse since I wrote it. But whatever in that letter you might justly resent——"

"I did not resent——"

Graham heard not the interruption, but hurried on. "You would forgive could you read my heart. No matter. Every sentiment in that letter, except those which conveyed admiration, I retract. Be mine, and instead of presuming to check in you the irresistible impulse of genius to the first place in the head or the heart of the world, I will teach myself to encourage, to share, to exult in it. Do you know what a difference there is between the absent one and the present one—between the distant image against whom our doubts, our fears, our suspicions, raise up hosts of imaginary giants, barriers of visionary walls, and the beloved face before the sight of which the hosts are fled, the walls are vanished? Isaura, we meet again. You know now from my own lips that I love you. I think your lips will not deny that you love me. You say that you are affianced to another. Tell the man frankly, honestly, that you mistook your heart. It is not yours to give. Save yourself, save him, from a union in which there can be no happiness."

"It is too late," said Isaura, with hollow tones, but with no trace of vacillating weakness on her brow and lips. "Did I say now to that other one, 'I break the faith that I pledged to you,' I should kill him, body and soul. Slight thing though I be, to him I am all in all; to you, Mr. Vane, to you a memory—the memory of one whom a year, perhaps a month, hence, you will rejoice to think you have escaped."

She passed from him—passed away from the flowers and the starlight; and when Graham—recovering from the stun of her crushing words, and with the haughty mien and step of the man who goes forth from the ruin of his hopes, leaning for support upon his pride—when Graham re-entered the room, all the guests had departed save only Alain, who was still exchanging whispered words with Valérie.

CHAPTER IV.

THE next day, at the hour appointed, Graham entered Alain's apartment. "I am glad to tell you," said the Marquis, gaily, "that the box has arrived, and we will very soon examine its contents. Breakfast claims precedence." During the meal Alain was in gay spirits, and did not at first notice the gloomy countenance and abstracted mood of his guest. At length, surprised at the dull response to his lively sallies on the part of a man generally so pleasant in the frankness of his speech, and the cordial ring of his sympathetic laugh, it occurred to him that the change in Graham must be ascribed to something that had gone wrong in the meeting with Isaura the evening before; and remembering the curtness with which Graham had implied disinclination to converse about the fair Italian, he felt perplexed how to reconcile the impulse of his

good-nature with the discretion imposed on his good-breeding. At all events, a compliment to the lady whom Graham had so admired could do no harm.

"How well Mademoiselle Cicogna looked last night!"

"Did she? It seemed to me that, in health at least, she did not look very well. Have you heard what day M. Thiers will speak on the war?'

"Thiers? No. Who cares about Thiers? Thank heaven his day is past! I don't know any unmarried woman in Paris, not even Valérie—I mean Mademoiselle Duplessis—who has so exquisite a taste in dress as Mademoiselle Cicogna. Generally speaking, the taste of a female author is atrocious."

"Really—I did not observe her dress. I am no critic on subjects so dainty as the dress of ladies, or the tastes of female authors."

"Pardon me," said the *beau* Marquis, gravely. "As to dress, I think that is so essential a thing in the mind of woman, that no man who cares about women ought to disdain critical study of it. In woman, refinement of character is never found in vulgarity of dress. I have only observed that truth since I came up from Bretagne."

"I presume, my dear Marquis, that you may have read in Bretagne books which very few not being professed scholars have ever read at Paris; and possibly you may remember that Horace ascribes the most exquisite refinement in dress, denoted by the untranslatable words, '*simplex munditiis*,' to a lady who was not less distinguished by the ease and rapidity with which she could change her affection. Of course that allusion does not apply to Mademoiselle Cicogna; but there are many other exquisitely dressed ladies at Paris of whom an ill-fated admirer

'fidem
Mutatosque deos flebit.'

Now, with your permission, we will adjourn to the box of letters."

The box being produced and unlocked Alain looked with conscientious care at its contents before he passed over to Graham's inspection a few epistles, in which the Englishman immediately detected the same hand-writing as that of the letter from Louise which Richard King had bequeathed to him.

They were arranged and numbered chronologically

LETTER I.

"DEAR M. LE MARQUIS,—How can I thank you sufficiently for obtaining and remitting to me those certificates? You are, too, aware of the unhappy episode in my life not to know how inestimable is the service you render me. I am saved all further molestation from the man who had indeed no right over my freedom, but whose persecution might compel me to the scandal and disgrace of an appeal to the law for protection, and the avowal of the illegal marriage into which I was duped. I would rather be torn limb from limb by wild horses, like the Queen in the history books, than dishonor myself and the ancestry which I may at least claim on the mother's side, by proclaiming that I had lived with that low Englishman as his wife, when I was only—O heavens, I cannot conclude the sentence!

"No, Mons. le Marquis, I am in no want of the pecuniary aid you so generously wish to press on me. Though I know not where to address my poor dear uncle,—though I doubt, even if I did, whether I could venture to confide to him the secret known only to yourself as to the name I now bear—and if he hear of me at all he must believe me dead,—yet I have enough left of the money he last remitted to me for present support; and when that fails, I think, what with my knowledge of English and such other slender accomplishments as I possess, I could maintain myself as a teacher or governess in some German family. At all events, I will write to you again soon, and I entreat you to let me know all you can learn about my uncle. I feel so grateful to you for your just disbelief of the horrible calumny which must be so intolerably galling to a man so proud, and, whatever his errors, so incapable of a baseness.

"Direct to me *Poste restante*, Augsburg.

"Yours with all consideration.

"———."

LETTER II.

(*Seven months after the date of Letter I.*)

"AUGSBURG.

"DEAR M. LE MARQUIS,—I thank you for your kind little note informing me of the pains you have taken, as yet with no result, to ascertain what has become of my unfortunate uncle. My life since I last wrote has been a very quiet one. I have been teaching among a few families here; and among my pupils are two little girls of very high birth. They have taken so great a fancy to me that their mother has just asked me to come and reside at their house as governess. What wonderfully kind hearts those Germans have,—so simple, so truthful! They raise no troublesome questions,—accept my own story implicitly." Here follow a few commonplace sentences about the German character, and a postscript. "I go into my new home next week. When you hear more of my uncle, direct to me at the Countess von Rudesheim, Schloss N * * * M * * *, near Berlin."

"Rudesheim!" Could this be the relation, possibly the wife, of the Count von Rudesheim with whom Graham had formed acquaintance last year?

LETTER III.

(*Between three and four years after the date of the last.*)

"You startle me indeed, dear M. le Marquis. My uncle said to have been recognized in Algeria under another name, a soldier in the Algerine army? My dear, proud, luxurious uncle! Ah, I cannot believe it, any more than you do: but I long eagerly for such further news as you can learn of him. For myself, I shall perhaps surprise you when I say I am about to be married. Nothing can exceed the amiable kindness I have received from the Rudesheims since I have been in their house. For the last year especially I have been treated on equal terms as one of the family. Among the habitual visitors at the house is a gentleman of noble birth, but not of rank too high, nor of fortune too great, to make a marriage with the French widowed governess a *mesalliance*. I am sure thaf he loves me sincerely; and he is the only man I ever met whose love I have cared to win. We are to be married in the course of the year. Of course he is ignorant of my painful history, and will never learn it. And after all, Louise D—— is dead. In the home to which I am about to remove, there is no probabiiity that the wretched Englishman can ever cross my path. My secret is as safe with you as in the grave that holds her whom in the name of Louise D—— you once loved. Henceforth I shall trouble you no more with my letters; but if you hear anything decisively authentic of my uncle's fate, write me a line at any time, directed as before to Madame M——, enclosed to the Countess von Rudesheim.

"And accept, for all the kindness you have ever shown me, as to one whom you did not disdain to call a kinswoman, the assurance of my undying gratitude. In the alliance she now makes, your kinswoman does not discredit the name through which she is connected with the yet loftier line of Rochebriant."

To this letter the late Marquis had appended in pencil "Of course a Rochebriant never denies the claim of a kinswoman, even though a drawing-master's daughter. Beautiful creature, Louise, but a termagant! I could not love Venus if she were a termagant. L.'s head turned by the unlucky discovery that her mother was noble. In one form or other, every woman has the same disease—vanity. Name of her intended not mentioned—easily found out."

The next letter was dated May 7, 1859, on black-edged paper, and contained but these lines:

"I was much comforted by your kind visit yesterday, dear Marquis. My affliction has been heavy: but for the last two years my poor husband's conduct has rendered my life unhappy, and I am recovering the shock of his sudden death. It is true that I and the children are left very ill provided for; but I cannot accept your generous offer of aid. Have no fear as to my future fate. Adieu, my dear Marquis! This will reach you just before you start for Naples. *Bon voyage.*"

There was no address on this note—no postmark on the envelope—evidently sent by hand.

The last note, dated 1861, March 20, was briefer than its predecessor.

"I have taken your advice, dear Marquis; and, overcoming all scruples, I have accepted his kind offer, on the condition that I am never to be taken to England. I had no option in this marriage. I can now own to you that my poverty had become urgent.

"Yours, with inalienable gratitude,

"——."

This last note, too, was without postmark, and as evidently sent by hand.

"There are no other letters, then, from this writer?" asked Graham; "and no further clue as to her existence?"

"None that I have discovered; and I see now why I preserved these letters. There is nothing in their contents not creditable to my poor father. They show how capable he was of goodnatured disinterested kindness towards even a distant relation of whom he could certainly not have been proud, judging not only by his own pencilled note, or by the writer's condition as a governess, but by her loose sentiments as to the marriage tie. I have not the slightest idea who she could be. I never at least heard of one connected, however distantly, with my family, whom I could identify with the writer of these letters."

"I may hold them a short time in my possession?"

"Pardon me a preliminary question. If I may venture to form a conjecture, the object of your search must be connected with your countryman, whom the lady politely calls the 'wretched Englishman;' but I own I should not like to lend, through these letters, a pretence to any steps that may lead to a scandal in which my father's name or that of any member of my family could be mixed up."

"Marquis, it is to prevent the possibility of all scandal that I ask you to trust these letters to my discretion."

"*Foi de gentilhomme?*"

"*Foi de gentilhomme!*"

"Take them. When and where shall we meet again?"

"Soon, I trust; but I must leave Paris this evening. I am bound to Berlin in quest of this Countess von Rudesheim: and I fear that in a very few days intercourse between France and the German frontier will be closed upon travellers."

After a few more words not worth recording, the two young men shook hands and parted.

CHAPTER V.

It was with an interest languid and listless indeed, compared with that which he would have felt a day before, that Graham mused over the remarkable advances toward the discovery of Louise Duval which were made in the letters he had perused. She had married, then, first a foreigner, whom she spoke of as noble, and whose name and residence could be easily found through the Countess von Rudesheim. The marriage did not seem to have been a happy one. Left a widow in reduced circumstances, she had married again, evidently without affection. She was living so late as 1861, and she had children living in 1859; was the child referred to by Richard King one of them?

The tone and style of the letters served to throw some light on the character of the writer: they evinced pride, stubborn self-will, and unamiable hardness of nature; but her rejection of all pecuniary aid from a man like the late Marquis de Rochebriant betokened a certain dignity of sentiment. She was evidently, whatever her strange ideas about her first marriage with Richard King, no vulgar woman of gallantry; and there must have been some sort of charm about her to have excited a friendly interest in a kinsman so remote, and a man of pleasure so selfish, as her high-born correspondent.

But what now, so far as concerned his own happiness, was the hope, the probable certainty, of a speedy fulfilment of the trust bequeathed to him? Whether the result, in the death of the mother, and more especially of the child, left him rich, or, if the last survived, reduced his fortune to a modest independence, Isaura was equally lost to him, and fortune became valueless. But his first emotions on recovering from the shock of hearing from Isaura's lips that she was irrevocably affianced to another, were not those of self-reproach. They were those of intense bitterness against her who, if really so much attached to him as he had been led to hope, could within so brief a time reconcile her heart to marriage with another. This bitterness was no doubt unjust; but I believe it to be natural to men of a nature so proud and of affections so intense as Graham's, under similar defeats of hope. Resentment is the first impulse in a man loving with the whole ardor of his soul, rejected, no matter why or wherefore, by the woman by whom he had cause to believe he himself was beloved; and though Graham's standard of honor was certainly the reverse of low, yet man does not view honor in the same light as woman does, when involved in analogous difficulties of position.

Graham conscientiously thought that if Isaura so loved him as to render distasteful an engagement to another which could only very recently have been contracted, it would be more honorable frankly so to tell the accepted suitor than to leave him in ignorance that her heart was estranged. But these engagements are very solemn things with girls like Isaura, and hers was no ordinary obligation of woman-honor. Had the accepted one been superior in rank—fortune—all that flatters the ambition of woman in the choice of marriage; had he been resolute, and strong, and self-dependent amid the trials and perils of life,—then possibly the woman's honor might find excuse in escaping the penalties of its pledge. But the poor, ailing, infirm, morbid boy-poet, who looked to her as his saving angel in body, in mind, and soul—to say to him, "Give me back my freedom," would be to abandon him to death and to sin.

But Graham could not of course divine why what he as a man thought right was to Isaura as woman impossible: and he returned to his old prejudiced notion that there is no real depth and ardor of affection for human lovers in the poetess whose mind and heart are devoted to the creation of imaginary heroes. Absorbed in reverie, he took his way slowly and with downcast looks towards the British Embassy, at which it was well to ascertain whether the impending war yet necessitated special passports for Germany.

"*Bon jour, cher ami,*" said a pleasant voice; "and how long have you been at Paris?"

"Oh, my dear M. Savarin! charmed to see you looking so well! Madame well too, I trust? My kindest regards to her. I have been in Paris but a day or two, and I leave this evening."

"So soon? The war frightens you away, I suppose. Which way are you going now?"

"To the British embassy."

"Well, I will go with you so far—it is in my own direction. I have to call at the charming Italian's with congratulations—on news I only heard this morning."

"You mean Mademoiselle Cicogna—and the news that demands congratulations—her approaching marriage!"

"*Mon Dieu!* when could you have heard of that?"

"Last night at the house of M. Duplessis."

"*Parbleu!* I shall scold her well for confiding to her new friend Valérie the secret she kept from her old friends, my wife and myself."

"By the way," said Graham, with a tone of admirably-feigned indifference, "who is the happy man? That part of the secret I did not hear."

"Can't you guess?"

"No."

"Gustave Rameau."

"Ah!" Graham almost shrieked, so sharp and shrill was his cry. "Ah! I ought indeed to have guessed that!"

"Madame Savarin, I fancy, helped to make up the marriage. I hope it may turn out well; certainly it will be his salvation. May it be for her happiness!"

"No doubt of that! Two poets—born for each other, I daresay. Adieu, my dear Savarin! Here we are at the embassy."

CHAPTER VI.

THAT evening Graham found himself in the *coupé* of the express train to Strasbourg. He had sent to engage the whole *coupé* to himself, but that was impossible. One place was bespoken as far as C——, after which Graham might prosecute his journey alone on paying for the three places.

When he took his seat another man was in the further corner whom he scarcely noticed. The train shot rapidly on for some leagues. Profound silence in the *coupé*, save at moments those very impatient sighs that came from the very depths of the heart, and of which he who sighs is unconscious, burst from the Englishman's lips, and drew on him the observant side-glance of his fellow-traveller.

At length the fellow-traveller said in very good English, though with French accent, "Would you object, sir, to my lighting my little carriage-lantern? I am in the habit of reading in the night train, and the wretched lamp they give us does not permit that. But if you wish to sleep, and my lantern would prevent you doing so, consider my request unasked."

"You are most courteous, sir. Pray light your lantern—that will not interfere with my sleep."

As Graham thus answered, far away from the place and the moment as his thoughts were, it yet faintly struck him that he had heard that voice before.

The man produced a small lantern, which he attached to the window-sill, and drew forth from a small leathern bag sundry newspapers and pamphlets. Graham flung himself back, and in a minute or so again came his sigh. "Allow me to offer you those evening journals—you may not have had time to read them before starting," said the fellow-traveller, leaning forward, and extending the newspapers with one hand, while with the other he lifted his lantern. Graham turned, and the faces of the two men were close to each other—Graham with his travelling-cap drawn over his brows, the other with head uncovered.

"Monsieur Lebeau!"

"*Bon soir*, Mr. Lamb!"

Again silence for a moment or so. Monsieur Lebeau then broke it—

"I think, Mr. Lamb, that in better society than that of the Faubourg Montmartre you are known under another name."

Graham had no heart then for the stage-play of a part, and answered, with quiet haughtiness, "Possibly—and what name?"

"Graham Vane. And, sir," continued Lebeau, with a haughtiness equally quiet, but somewhat more menacing, "since we two gentlemen find ourselves thus close, do I ask too much if I inquire why you condescend to seek my acquaintance in disguise?"

"Monsieur le Vicomte de Mauléon, when you talk of disguise, is it too much to inquire why my acquaintance was accepted by Monsieur Lebeau?"

"Ha! Then you confess that it was Vic-

tor de Mauléon whom you sought when you first visited the *Café Jean Jacques?*"

"Frankly I confess it."

Monsieur Lebeau drew himself back, and seemed to reflect.

"I see! Solely for the purpose of learning whether Victor de Mauléon could give you any information about Louise Duval. Is it so?"

"Monsieur le Vicomte, you say truly."

Again M. Lebeau paused as if in reflection; and Graham, in that state of mind when a man who may most despise and detest the practice of duelling, may yet feel a thrill of delight if some homicide would be good enough to put him out of his misery, flung aside his cap, lifted his broad frank forehead, and stamped his boot impatiently as if to provoke a quarrel.

M. Lebeau lowered his spectacles, and with those calm, keen, searching eyes of his, gazed at the Englishman.

"It strikes me," he said with a smile, the fascination of which not even those faded whiskers could disguise—"it strikes me that there are two ways in which gentlemen such as you and I are can converse: firstly, with reservation and guard against each other; secondly, with perfect openness. Perhaps of the two I have more need of reservation and wary guard against any stranger than you have. Allow me to propose the alternative—perfect openness. What say you?" and he extended his hand.

"Perfect openness," answered Graham, softened into sudden liking for this once terrible swordsman, and shaking, as an Englishman shakes, the hand held out to him in peace by the man from whom he had anticipated quarrel.

"Permit me now, before you address any questions to me, to put one to you. How did you learn that Victor de Mauléon was identical with Jean Lebeau!"

"I heard that from an agent of the police."

"Ah!"

"Whom I consulted as to the means of ascertaining whether Louise Duval was alive—if so, where she could be found."

"I thank you very much for your information. I had no notion that the police of Paris had divined the original *alias* of poor Monsieur Lebeau, though something occurred at Lyons which made me suspect it. Strange that the Government, knowing through the police that Victor de Mauléon, a writer they had no reason to favor, had been in so humble a position, should never, even in their official journals, have thought it prudent to say so! But, now I think of it, what if they had? They could prove nothing against Jean Lebeau. They could but say, 'Jean Lebeau is suspected to be too warm a lover of liberty, too earnest a friend of the people, and Jean Lebeau is the editor of "*Le Sens Commun.*"' Why, that assertion would have made Victor de Mauléon the hero of the Reds, the last thing a prudent Government could desire. I thank you cordially for your frank reply. Now, what question would you put to me?"

"In one word, all you can tell me about Louise Duval."

"You shall have it. I had heard vaguely in my young days that a half-sister of mine by my father's first marriage with Mademoiselle de Beauvilliers had—when in advanced middle life he married a second time—conceived a dislike for her mother-in-law, and, being of age, with an independent fortune of her own, had quitted the house, taken up her residence with an elderly female relative, and there had contracted a marriage with a man who gave her lessons in drawing. After that marriage, which my father in vain tried to prevent, my sister was renounced by her family. That was all I knew till, after I came into my inheritance by the death of both my parents, I learned from my father's confidential lawyer, that the drawing master M. Duval, had soon dissipated his wife's fortune, become a widower with one child—a girl—and fallen into great distress.

"He came to my father, begging for pecuniary aid. My father, though by no means rich, consented to allow him a yearly pension, on condition that he never revealed to his child her connection with our family. The man agreed to the condition, and called at my father's lawyer quarterly for his annuity. But the lawyer informed me that this deduction from my income had ceased, that M. Duval had not for a year called or sent for the sum due to him, and that he must therefore be dead. One day my valet informed me that a young lady wished to see me—in those days young ladies very often called on me. I desired her to be shown in. There entered a

young creature, almost of my own age, who, to my amazement, saluted me as uncle.

"This was the child of my half-sister. Her father had been dead several months, fulfilling very faithfully the condition on which he had held his pension, and the girl never dreaming of the claims that, if wise, poor child, she ought not to have cared for—viz., to that obsolete useless pauper birthright, a branch on the family tree of a French noble. But in pinch of circumstance, and from female curiosity, hunting among the papers her father had left for some clue to the reasons for the pension he had received, she found letters from her mother, letters from my father, which indisputably proved that she was grandchild to the *feu* Vicomte de Mauléon, and niece to myself. Her story as told to me was very pitiable. Conceiving herself to be nothing higher in birth than daughter to this drawing-master, at his death, poor, penniless orphan that she was, she had accepted the hand of an English student of medicine whom she did not care for.

"Miserable with this man, on finding by the documents I refer to that she was my niece, she came to me for comfort and counsel. What counsel could I or any man give to her but to make the best of what had happened, and live with her husband? But then she started another question. It seems that she had been talking with some one, I think her landlady, or some other woman with whom she had made acquaintance—was she legally married to this man? Had he not entrapped her ignorance into a false marriage? This became a grave question, and I sent at once to my lawyer. On hearing the circumstances, he at once declared that the marriage was not legal according to the laws of France. But, doubtless, her English *soi-disant* husband was not cognizant of the French law, and a legal marriage could with his assent be at once solemnized."

"Monsieur Vane, I cannot find words to convey to you the joy that poor girl showed in her face and in her words when she learned that she was not bound to pass her life with that man as his wife. It was in vain to talk and reason with her. Then arose the other question, scarcely less important. True, the marriage was not legal, but would it not be better on all accounts to take steps to have it formally annulled, thus freeing her from the harassment of any claim the Englishman might advance, and enabling her to establish the facts in a right position, not injurious to her honor in the eyes of any future suitor to her hand? She would not hear of such a proposal. She declared that she could not bring to the family she pined to re-enter the scandal of disgrace. To allow that she had made such a *mésalliance* would be bad enough in itself; but to proclaim to the world that, though nominally the wife, she had in fact been only the mistress, of this medical student—she would rather throw herself into the Seine. All she desired was to find some refuge, some hiding-place for a time, whence she could write to the man informing him that he had no lawful hold on her. Doubtless he would not seek then to molest her. He would return to his own country, and be effaced from her life. And then, her story unknown, she might form a more suitable alliance. Fiery young creature though she was—true De Mauléon in being so fiery—she interested me strongly. I should say that she was wonderfully handsome; and though imperfectly educated, and brought up in circumstances so lowly, there was nothing common about her—a certain *je ne sais quoi* of stateliness and race. At all events she did with me what she wished. I agreed to aid her desire of a refuge and hiding-place. Of course I could not lodge her in my own apartment, but I induced a female relation of her mother's, an old lady living at Versailles, to receive her, stating her birth, but of course concealing her illegal marriage.

"From time to time I went to see her. But one day I found this restless bright-plumaged bird flown. Among the ladies who visited at her relative's house was a certain Madame Marigny, a very pretty young widow. Madame Marigny and Louise formed a sudden and intimate friendship. The widow was moving from Versailles into an apartment at Paris, and invited Louise to share it. She had consented. I was not pleased at this; for the widow was too young, and too much of a coquette, to be a safe companion to Louise. But though professing much gratitude and great regard for me, I had no power of controlling the poor girl's actions. Her nominal husband, meanwhile, had left France, and nothing more was heard or known of him. I

saw that the best thing that could possibly befall Louise was marriage with some one rich enough to gratify her taste for luxury and pomp; and that if such a marriage offered itself, she might be induced to free it from all possible embarrassment by procuring the annulment of the former, from which she had hitherto shrunk in such revolt. This opportunity presented itself. A man already rich, and in a career that promised to make him infinitely richer, an associate of mine in those days when I was rapidly squandering the remnant of my inheritance—this man saw her at the opera in company with Madame Marigny, fell violently in love with her, and ascertaining her relationship to me, besought an introduction. I was delighted to give it; and, to say the truth, I was then so reduced to the bottom of my casket, I felt that it was becoming impossible for me to continue the aid I had hitherto given to Louise, and what then would become of her? I thought it fair to tell Louvier——"

"Louvier—the financier?"

"Ah, that was a slip of the tongue, but no matter; there is no reason for concealing his name. I thought it right, I say, to tell Louvier confidentially the history of the unfortunate illegal marriage. It did not damp his ardor. He wooed her to the best of his power, but she evidently took him into great dislike. One day she sent for me in much excitement, showed me some advertisements in the French journals which, though not naming her, evidently pointed at her, and must have been dictated by her *soi-disant* husband. The advertisements might certainly lead to her discovery if she remained in Paris. She entreated my consent to remove elsewhere. Madame Marigny had her own reason for leaving Paris, and would accompany her. I supplied her with the necessary means, and a day or two afterwards she and her friend departed, as I understood, for Brussels. I received no letter from her; and my own affairs so seriously preoccupied me, that poor Louise might have passed altogether out of my thoughts, had it not been for the suitor she had left in despair behind. Louvier besought me to ascertain her address; but I could give him no other clue to it than that she said she was going to Brussels, but should soon remove to some quiet village. It was not for a long time—I can't remember how long—it might be several weeks, perhaps two or three months,—that I received a short note from her stating that she waited for a small remittance, the last she would accept from me; as she was resolved, so soon as her health would permit, to find means to maintain herself—and telling me to direct to her, *poste restante*, Aix-la Chapelle. I sent her the sum she asked, perhaps a little more, but with a confession reluctantly wrung from me that I was a ruined man; and I urged her to think very seriously before she refused the competence and position which a union with M. Louvier would insure.

"This last consideration so pressed on me that, when Louvier called on me, I think that day or the next, I gave him Louise's note, and told him that, if he were still as much in love with her as ever, *les absens ont toujours tort*, and he had better go to Aix-la-Chapelle and find her out; that he had my hearty approval of his wooing, and consent to his marriage, though I still urged the wisdom and fairness, if she would take the preliminary step—which, after all, the French laws frees as much as possible from pain and scandal—of annulling the irregular marriage into which her childlike youth had been decoyed.

"Louvier left me for Aix-la-Chapelle. The very next day came that cruel affliction which made me a prey to the most intolerable calumny, which robbed me of every friend, which sent me forth from my native country penniless, and resolved to be nameless—until—until—well, until my hour could come again,—every dog, if not hanged, has its day;—when that affliction befell me, I quitted France, heard no more of Louvier nor of Louise; indeed, no letter addressed to me at Paris would have reached——"

The man paused here, evidently with painful emotion. He resumed in the quiet matter-of-fact way in which he had commenced his narrative.

"Louise had altogether faded out of my remembrance until your question revived it. As it happened, the question came at the moment when I meditated resuming my real name and social position. In so doing, I should, of course, come in contact with my old acquaintance Louvier; and the name of Louise was necessarily associated with his. I called on him, and made myself known. The slight in-

formation I gave you as to my niece was gleaned from him. I may now say more. It appears that when he arrived at Aix-la-Chapelle he found that Louise Duval had left it a day or two previously, and according to scandal had been for some time courted by a wealthy and noble lover, whom she had gone to Munich to meet. Louvier believed this tale; quitted Aix indignantly, and never heard more of her. The probability is, M. Vane, that she must have been long dead. But if living still, I feel quite sure that she will communicate with me some day or other. Now that I have reappeared in Paris in my own name —entered into a career that, for good or for evil, must ere long bring my name very noisily before the public—Louise cannot fail to hear of my existence and my whereabouts; and unless I am utterly mistaken as to her character, she will assuredly inform me of her own. Oblige me with your address, and in that case I will let you know. Of course I take for granted the assurance you gave me last year, that you only desire to discover her in order to render her some benefit, not to injure or molest her?"

"Certainly. To that assurance I pledge my honor. Any letter with which you may favor me had better be directed to my London address; here is my card. But, M. le Comte, there is one point on which pray pardon me if I question you still. Had you no suspicion that there was one reason why this lady might have quitted Paris so hastily, and have so shrunk from the thought of marriage so advantageous, in a worldly point of view, as that with M. Louvier,—namely, that she anticipated the probability of becoming the mother of a child by the man whom she refused to acknowledge as a husband?"

"That idea did not strike me until you asked me if she had a child. Should your conjeeture be correct, it would obviously increase her repugnance to apply for the annulment of her illegal marriage. But if Louise is still living and comes across me, I do not doubt that, the motives for concealment no longer operating, she will confide to me the truth. Since we have been talking together thus frankly, I suppose I may fairly ask whether I do not guess correctly in supposing that this *soi-disant* husband, whose name I forget,—Mac——something, perhaps Scotch—I think she said he was *Ecossais*,—is dead and has left by will some legacy to Louise and any child she may have borne to him?"

"Not exactly so. The man, as you say, is dead; but he bequeathed no legacy to the lady who did not hold herself married to him. But there are those connected with him who, knowing the history, think that some compensation is due for the wrong so unconsciously done to her, and yet more to any issue of a marriage not meant to be irregular or illegal. Permit me now to explain why I sought you in another guise and name than my own. I could scarcely place in M. Lebeau the confidence which I now unreservedly place in the Vicomte de Mauléon."

"*Cela va sans dire.* You believed, then, that calumny about the jewels; you do not believe it now?"

"Now, my amazement is, that any one who had known you could believe it."

"Oh, how often, and with tears of rage in my exile—my wanderings—have I asked that question of myself! That rage has ceased; and I have but one feeling left for that credulous, fickle Paris, of which one day I was the idol, the next the byword. Well, a man sometimes plays chess more skilfully for having been long a mere bystander. He understands better how to move, and when to sacrifice the pieces. Politics, M. Vane, is the only exciting game left to me at my years. At yours, there is still that of love. How time flies! we are nearing the station at which I descend. I have kinsfolk of my mother's in these districts. They are not Imperialists; they are said to be powerful in the department. But before I apply to them in my own name, I think it prudent that M. Lebeau should quietly ascertain what is their real strength, and what would be the prospects of success if Victor de Mauléon offered himself as *député* at the next election. Wish him joy, M. Vane! If he succeed, you will hear of him some day crowned in the Capitol, or hurled from the Tarpeian rock."

Here the train stopped. The false Lebeau gathered up his papers, readjusted his spectacles and his bag, descended lightly, and, pressing Graham's hand as he paused at the door, said, "Be sure I will not forget your address if I have anything to say. *Bon voyage!*"

CHAPTER VII.

GRAHAM continued his journey to Strasbourg. On arriving there he felt very unwell. Strong though his frame was, the anguish and self-struggle through which he had passed since the day he had received in London Mrs. Morley's letter, till that on which he had finally resolved on his course of conduct at Paris, and the shock which had annihilated his hopes in Isaura's rejection, had combined to exhaust his endurance, and fever had already commenced when he took his place in the *coupé*. If there be a thing which a man should not do when his system is undermined, and his pulse between 90 and 100, it is to travel all night by a railway express. Nevertheless, as the Englishman's will was yet stronger than his frame, he would not give himself more than an hour's rest, and again started for Berlin. Long before he got to Berlin, the will failed him as well as the frame. He was lifted out of the carriage, taken to a hotel in a small German town, and six hours afterwards he was delirious. It was fortunate for him that under such circumstances plenty of money and Scott's circular-notes for some hundreds were found in his pocket-book, so that he did not fail to receive attentive nursing and skilful medical treatment. There, for the present, I must leave him—leave him for how long? But any village apothecary could say that fever such as his must run its course. He was still in bed, and very dimly—and that but at times—conscious, when the German armies were gathering round the pen-fold of Sedan.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN the news of the disastrous day at Sedan reached Paris, the first effect was that of timid consternation. There were a few cries of *Déchéance!* fewer still of *Vive la République!* among the motley crowd; but they were faint, and chiefly by ragged *gamins*. A small body repaired to Trochu and offered him the sceptre, which he politely declined. A more important and respectable body—for it comprised the majority of the *Corps Législatif*—urged Palikao to accept the temporary dictatorship, which the War Minister declined with equal politeness. In both these overtures it was clear that the impulse of the proposers was toward any form of government rather than republican. The *sergens de ville* were sufficient that day to put down the riot. They did make a charge on a mob, which immediately ran away.

The morning of that day the Council of Ten were summoned by Lebeau—*minus* only Rameau, who was still too unwell to attend, and the Belgian, not then at Paris; but their place was supplied by the two travelling members, who had been absent from the meeting before recorded. These were conspirators better known in history than those I have before described; professional conspirators—personages who from their youth upwards had done little else but conspire. Following the discreet plan pursued elsewhere throughout this humble work, I give their names other than they bore. One, a very swarthy and ill-favored man, between forty and fifty, I call Paul Grimm—by origin a German, but by rearing and character French; from the hair on his head, staring up rough and ragged as a bramble-bush, to the soles of small narrow feet, shod with dainty care, he was a personal coxcomb, and spent all he could spare on his dress. A clever man, not ill-educated—a vehement and effective speaker at a club. Vanity and an amorous temperament had made him a conspirator, since he fancied he interested the ladies more in that capacity than any other. His companion, Edgar Ferrier, would have been a journalist, only hitherto his opinions had found no readers; the opinions were those of Marat. He rejoiced in thinking that his hour for glory, so long deferred, had now arrived. He was thoroughly sincere: his father and grandfather had died in a madhouse. Both these men, insignificant in ordinary times, were likely to become of terrible importance in the crisis of a revolution. They both had great power with the elements that form a Parisian mob. The instructions given to these members of the Council by Lebeau were brief: they were summed up in the one word, *Déchéance*.

The formidable nature of a council apparently so meanly constituted, became strikingly evident at that moment, because it was so small in number, while each one of these could put in movement a large section of the populace:

secondly, because, unlike a revolutionary club or a numerous association, no time was wasted in idle speeches, and all were under the orders of one man of clear head and resolute purpose; and thirdly, and above all, because one man supplied the treasury, and money for an object desired was liberally given and promptly at hand. The meeting did not last ten minutes, and about two hours afterwards its effects were visible. From Montmartre and Belleville and Montretout poured streams of *ouvriers*, with whom Armand Monnier was a chief, and the *Médecin des Pauvres* an oracle. Grimm and Ferrier headed other detachments that startled the well-dressed idlers on the Boulevards. The stalwart figure of the Pole was seen on the Place de la Concorde, towering amidst other refugees, amid which glided the Italian Champion of humanity. The cry of *Déchéance* became louder. But as yet there were only few cries of *Viva la République!*—such a cry was not on the orders issued by Lebeau. At midnight the crowd round the hall of the *Corps Législatif* is large: cries of *La Déchéance* loud —a few cries, very feeble of *Vive la République!*

What followed on the 4th—the marvellous audacity with which half a dozen lawyers belonging to a pitiful minority in a Chamber elected by universal suffrage walked into the Hotel de Ville and said, "The Republic is established, and we are its Government," history has told too recently for me to narrate. On the evening of the 5th the Council of Ten met again: the Pole; the Italian radiant; Grimm and Ferrier much excited and rather drunk; the *Médecin des Pauvres* thoughtful; and Armand Monnier gloomy. A rumor has spread that General Trochu, in accepting the charge imposed on him, has exacted from the Government the solemn assurance of respect for God, and for the rights of family and property. The Atheist is a very indignant at the assent of the Government to the first proposition; Monnier equally indignant at the assent to the second and third. What has that honest *ouvrier* conspired for?—What has he suffered for?—of late nearly starved for?—but to marry another man's wife, getting rid of his own, and to legalize a participation in the property of his employer,—and now he is no better off than before. "There must be another revolution," he whispers to the Atheist.

"Certainly," whispers back the Atheist; "he who desires to better this world must destroy all belief in another."

The conclave was assembled when Lebeau entered by the private door. He took his place at the head of the table; and, fixing on the group eyes that emitted a cold gleam through the spectacles, thus spoke—

"Messieurs, or Citoyens, which ye will—I no longer call ye *confrères*—you have disobeyed or blundered my instructions. On such an occasion disobedience and blunder are crimes equally heinous."

Angry murmurs.

"Silence! Do not add mutiny to your other offences. My instructions were simple and short. Aid in the abolition of the Empire. Do not aid in any senseless cry for a Republic or any other form of government. Leave that to the Legislature. What have you done? You swelled the crowd that invaded the *Corps Législatif*. You, Dombinsky, not even a Frenchman, dare to mount the President's rostrum, and bawl forth your senseless jargon. You, Edgar Ferrier, from whom I expected better, ascend the tribune, and invite the ruffians in the crowd to march to the prisons and release the convicts; and all of you swell the mob at the Hotel de Ville, and inaugurate the reign of folly by creating an oligarchy of lawyers to resist the march of triumphal armies. Messieurs, I have done with you. You are summoned for the last time: the Council is dissolved."

With these words Lebeau put on his hat and turned to depart. But the Pole, who was seated near him, sprang to his feet, exclaiming,—"Traitor, thou shalt not escape! Comrades, he wants to sell us!"

"I have a right to sell *you*, at least, for I bought you, and a very bad bargain I made," said Lebeau, in a tone of withering sarcasm.

"Liar!" cried the Pole, and seized Lebeau by the left hand, while with the right he drew forth a revolver. Ferrier and Grimm, shouting "*A bas le renégat!*" would have rushed forward in support of the Pole, but Monnier thrust himself between them and their intended victim, crying with a voice that dominated their yell, "Back!—we are not assasins." Before he had finished the sentence the Pole was on his knees. With a vigor which no one could have expected from the seeming sexagenarian,

Lebeau had caught the right arm of his assailant, twisted it back so mercilessly as almost to dislocate elbow and shoulder joint. One barrel of the revolver discharged itself harmlessly against the opposite wall, and the pistol itself then fell from the unnerved hand of the would-be assassin; and what with the pain and the sudden shock, the stalwart Dombinsky fell in the attitude of a suppliant at the feet of his unlooked for vanquisher.

Lebeau released his hold, possessed himself of the pistol, pointing the barrels towards Edgar Ferrier, who stood with mouth agape and lifted arm arrested, and said quietly: "Monsieur, have the goodness to open that window." Ferrier mechanically obeyed. "Now, hireling," continued Lebeau, addressing the vanquished Pole, "choose between the door and the window." "Go my friend," whispered the Italian. The Pole did not utter a word; but rising nimbly, and rubbing his arm, stalked to the door. There he paused a moment and said, "I retire overpowered by numbers," and vanished.

"Messieurs," resumed Lebeau, calmly, "I repeat that the Council is dissolved. In fact its object is fulfilled more abruptly than any of us foresaw, and by means which I at least had been too long out of Paris to divine as possible. I now see that every aberration of reason is possible to the Parisians. The object that united us was the fall of the Empire. As I have always frankly told you, with that object achieved, separation commences. Each of us has his own crotchet, which differs from the other man's. Pursue yours as you will—I pursue mine—you will find Jean Lebeau no more in Paris: *il s'efface. Au plaisir, mais pas au revoir.*"

He retreated to the masked door and disappeared.

Marc le Roux, the porter or custos of that ruinous council-hall, alarmed at the explosion of the pistol, had hurried into the room, and now stood unheeded by the door with mouth egape, while Lebeau thus curtly dissolved the assembly. But when the president vanished through the secret doorway, Le Roux also retreated. Hastily descending the stairs, he made as quickly as his legs could carry him for the mouth of the alley in the rear of the house, through which he knew that Lebeau must pass. He arrived, panting and breathless, in time to catch hold of the ex-president's arm. "Pardon, citizen," stammered he, "but do I understand that you have sent the Council of ten to the devil?"

"I? Certainly not, my good Paul; I dismiss them to go where they like. If they prefer the direction you name it is their own choice. I declined to accompany them, and I advise you not to do so."

"But, citizen, have you considered what is to become of Madame? Is she to be turned out of the lodge? Are my wages to stop, and Madame to be left without a crust to put into her soup?"

"Not so bad as that; I have just paid the rent of the *baraque* for three months in advance, and there is your quarter's pay, in advance also. My kind regards to Madame, and tell her to keep your skin safe from the schemes of these lunatics." Thrusting some pieces of gold into the hands of the porter, Lebeau nodded his adieu, and hastened along his way.

Absorbed in his own reflections, he did not turn to look behind. But if he had, he could not have detected the dark form of the porter, creeping in the deep shadow of the streets with distant but watchful footsteps.

CHAPTER IX.

THE conspirators, when left by their president, dispersed in deep, not noisy resentment. They were indeed too stunned for loud demonstration; and belonging to different grades of life, and entertaining different opinions, their confidence in each other seemed lost now that the chief who had brought and kept them together was withdrawn from their union. The Italian and the Atheist slank away, whispering to each other. Grimm reproached Ferrier for deserting Dombinsky and obeying Lebeau. Ferrier accused Grimm of his German origin, and hinted at denouncing him as a Prussian spy. Gaspard le Noy linked his arm in Monnier's, and when they had gained the dark street without, leading into a labyrinth of desolate lanes, the *Médecin des Pauvres* said to the mechanic: "You are a brave fellow, Monnier. Lebeau owes you a good turn. But for your cry, 'We are not assassins,' the Pole

might not have been left without support. No atmosphere is so infectious as that in which we breathe the same air of revenge: when the violence of one man puts into action the anger or suspicion of others, they become like a pack of hounds, which follow the spring of the first hound, whether on the wild boar or their own master. Even I, who am by no means hot-headed, had my hand on my case-knife when the word 'assassin' rebuked and disarmed me."

"Nevertheless," said Monnier, gloomily, "I half repent the impulse which made me interfere to save that man. Better he should die than live to betray the cause we allowed him to lead."

"Nay, *mon ami*. speaking candidly, we must confess that he never from the first pretended to advocate the cause for which you conspired. On the contrary, he always said that with the fall of the Empire our union would cease, and each become free to choose his own way towards his own after-objects."

"Yes," answered Armand, reluctantly; "he said that to me privately, with still greater plainness than he said it to the Council. But I answered as plainly."

"How?"

"I told him that the man who takes the first step in a revolution, and persuades others to go along with him, cannot in safety stand still or retreat when the next step is to be taken. It is '*en avant*,' or '*à la lanterne*.' So it shall be with him. Shall a fellow-being avail himself of the power over my mind which he derives from superior education or experience,—break into wild fragments my life, heretofore tranquil, orderly, happy,—make use of any opinions, which were then but harmless desires, to serve his own purpose, which was hostile to the opinions he roused into action,—say to me, 'Give yourself up to destroy the first obstacle in the way of securing a form of society which your inclinations prefer,' and then, that first obstacle destroyed, cry, 'Halt! I go with you no further; I will not help you to piece together the life I have induced you to shatter; I will not aid you to substitute for the society that pained you the society that would please; I leave you, struggling, bewildered, maddened, in the midst of chaos within and without you?' Shall a fellow-being do this, and vanish with a mocking cry: 'Tool! I have had enough of thee; I cast thee aside as worthless lumber?' Ah! let him beware! The tool is of iron, and can be shaped to edge and point."

The passion with which this rough eloquence was uttered, and the fierce sinister expression that had come over a countenance habitually open and manly, even when grave and stern, alarmed and startled Le Noy. "Pooh, my friend!" he said, rather falteringly, "you are too excited now to think justly. Go home and kiss your children. Never do anything that may make them shrink from their father. And as to Lebeau, try and forget him. He says he shall disappear from Paris. I believe him. It is clear to me that the man is not what he seemed to us. No man of sixty could by so easy a sleight of hand have brought that giant Pole to his knee. If Lebeau reappear it will be in some other form. Did you notice that in the momentary struggle his flaxen wig got disturbed, and beneath it I saw a dark curl. I suspect that the man is not only younger than he seemed, but of higher rank,—a conspirator, against one throne, perhaps, in order to be minister under another. There are such men."

Before Monnier, who seemed struck by these conjectures, collected his thoughts to answer, a tall man in the dress of a *sous lieutenant* stopped under a dim gas lamp, and catching sight of the artisan's face, seized him by the hand, exclaiming, "Armand, *mon frère!* well met; strange times, eh? Come and discuss them at the *Cafe de Lyon* yonder over a bowl of punch. I'll stand treat."

"Agreed, dear Charles."

"And if this monsieur is a friend of yours, perhaps he will join us."

"You are too obliging, Monsieur," answered Le Noy, not ill-pleased to get rid of his excited companion; "but it has been a busy day with me, and I am only fit for bed. Be abstinent of the punch, Armand. You are feverish already. Good night, Messieurs."

The *Café de Lyon*, in vogue among the National Guard of the *quartier*, was but a few yards off, and the brothers turn towards it arm in arm. "Who is the friend!" asked Charles; "I don't remember to have seen him with thee before."

"He belongs to the medical craft—a good patriot and a kind man—attends the poor

gratuitously. Yes, Charles, these are strange times; what dost thou think will come of them?"

They had now entered the *café;* and Charles had ordered the punch, and seated himself at a vacant table before he replied. "What will come of these times? I will tell thee. National deliverance and regeneration through the ascendency of the National Guard."

"Eh? I don't take," said Armand, bewildered.

"Probably not," answered Charles, with an air of compassionate conceit; "thou art a dreamer, but I am a politician." He tapped his forehead significantly. "At this custom-house ideas are examined before they are passed."

Armand gazed at his brother wistfully, and with a deference he rarely manifested towards any one who disputed his own claims to superior intelligence. Charles was a few years older than Monnier; he was of larger build; he had shaggy lowering eyebrows, a long obstinate upper lip, the face of a man who was accustomed to lay down the law. Inordinate self-esteem often gives that character to a physiognomy otherwise common-place. Charles passed for a deep thinker in his own set, which was a very different set from Armand's—not among workmen but small shopkeepers. He had risen in life to a grade beyond Armand's; he had always looked to the main chance, married the widow of a hosier and glover much older than himself, and in her right was a very respectable tradesman, comfortably well off; a Liberal, of course, but a Liberal *bourgeois*, equally against those above him and those below. Needless to add that he had no sympathy with his brother's socialistic opinions. Still he loved that brother as well as he could love any one except himself. And Armand, who was very affectionate, and with whom family ties were very strong, returned that love with ample interest; and though so fiercely at war with the class to which Charles belonged, was secretly proud of having a brother who was of that class. So in England I have known the most violent antagonist of the landed aristocracy—himself a cobbler—who interrupts a discourse on the crimes of aristocracy by saying, "Though I myself descend from a county family."

In an evil day Charles Monnier, enrolled in the National Guard, had received promotion in that patriotic corps. From that date he began to neglect his shop, to criticise military matters, and to think that if merit had fair play he should be a Cincinnatus or a Washington, he had not decided which.

"Yes," resumed Charles, ladling out the punch, "thou hast wit enough to perceive that our generals are imbeciles or traitors: that *gredin* Bonaparte has sold the army for ten millions of francs to Bismarck, and I have no doubt that Wimpffen has his share of the bargain. M'Mahon was wounded conveniently, and has his own terms for it. The regular army is nowhere. Thou wilt see—thou wilt see—they will not stop the march of the Prussians. Trochu will be obliged to come to the National Guard. Then we shall say, 'General, give us our terms, and go to sleep.' I shall be summoned to the council of war. I have my plan. I explain it—'tis accepted—it succeeds. I am placed in supreme command—the Prussians are chased back to their sourkrout. And I—well—I don't like to boast, but thou'lt see—thou'lt see—what will happen."

"And thy plan, Charles—thou hast formed it already?"

"Ay, ay,—the really military genius is prompt, *mon petit* Armand—a flash of the brain. Hark ye! Let the Vandals come to Paris and invest it. Whatever their numbers on paper, I don't care a button; they can only have a few thousand at any given point in the vast circumference of the capital. Any fool must grant that—thou must grant it, eh?"

"It seems just."

"Of course. Well, then, we proceed by sorties of 200,000 men repeated every other day, and in twelve days the Prussians are in full flight.* The country rises on their flight—they are cut to pieces. I depose Trochu—the National Guard elects the Saviour of France. I have a place in my eye for thee.

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* Charles Monnier seems to have indiscreetly blabbed out his "idea," for it was plagiarized afterwards at a meeting of the National Guards in the Salle de la Bourse by Citizen Rochebrune (slain 19th January, 1871, in the affair of Montretout). The plan, which he developed nearly in the same words as Charles Monnier, was received with lively applause; and at the close of his speech it was proposed to name at once Citizen Rochebrune, General of the National Guard, an honor which, unhappily for his country, the citizen had the modesty to decline.

Thou art superb as a decorator—thou shalt be Minister *des Beaux Arts*. But keep clear of the *canaille*. No more strikes then—thou wilt be an employer—respect thy future order."

Armand smiled mournfully. Though of intellect which, had it been disciplined, was far superior to his brother's, it was so estranged from practical opinions, so warped, so heated, so flawed and cracked in parts, that he did not see the ridicule of Charles's braggadocio. Charles had succeeded in life, Armand had failed; and Armand believed in the worldly wisdom of the elder born. But he was far too sincere for any bribe to tempt him to forsake his creed and betray his opinions. And he knew that it must be a very different revolution from that which his brother contemplated, that could allow him to marry another man's wife, and his "order" to confiscate other people's property.

"Don't talk of strikes, Charles. What is done is done. I was led into heading a strike, not on my own account, for I was well paid and well off, but for the sake of my fellow-workmen. I may regret now what I did, for the sake of Marie and the little ones. But it is an affair of honor, and I cannot withdraw from the cause till my order, as thou namest my class, has its rights."

"Bah! thou wilt think better of it when thou art an employer. Thou has suffered enough already. Remember that I warned thee against that old fellow in spectacles whom I met once at thy house. I told thee he would lead thee into mischief, and then leave thee to get out of it. I saw through him. I have a head! *Va!*"

"Thou wert a true prophet—he has duped me. But in moving me he has set others in movement; and I suspect he will find he has duped himself. Time will show."

Here the brothers were joined by some loungers belonging to the National Guard. The talk became general, the potations large. Towards daybreak Armand reeled home, drunk for the first time in his life. He was one of those whom drink makes violent. Marie had been sitting up for him, alarmed at his lengthened absence. But when she would have thrown herself on his breast, her pale face and her passionate sobs enraged him. He flung her aside roughly. From that night the man's nature was changed. If, as a physiognomist has said, each man has in him a portion of the wild beast, which is suppressed by mild civilizing circumstances, and comes uppermost when self-control is lost, the nature of many an honest workman, humane and tender-hearted as the best of us, commenced a change into the wild beast, that raged through the civil war of the Communists, on the day when half a dozen Incapables, with no more claim to represent the people of Paris than half a dozen monkeys would have, were allowed to elect themselves to supreme power, and in the very fact of that election released all the elements of passion, and destroyed all the bulwarks of order.

CHAPTER X.

No man perhaps had more earnestly sought and more passionately striven for the fall of the Empire than Victor de Mauléon; and perhaps no man was more dissatisfied and disappointed by the immediate consequences of that fall. In first conspiring against the Empire, he had naturally enough, in common with all the more intelligent enemies of the dynasty, presumed that its fate would be worked out by the normal effect of civil causes—the alienation of the educated classes, the discontent of the artisans, the eloquence of the press and of popular meetings, strengthened in proportion as the Emperor had been compelled to relax the former checks upon the licence of either. And de Mauléon had no less naturally concluded that there would be time given for the preparation of a legitimate and rational form of government to succeed that which was destroyed. For, as has been hinted or implied, this remarkable man was not merely an instigator of revolution through the Secret Council, and the turbulent agencies set in movement through the lower strata of society;—he was also in confidential communication with men eminent for wealth, station, and political repute, from whom he obtained the funds necessary for the darker purposes of conspiracy, into the elaboration of which they did not inquire; and these men, though belonging like himself to the Liberal party, were no hot-blooded democrats. Most of them where in favor of constitutional monarchy; all of them for forms of government very different from any republic in

which socialists or communists could find themselves upper-most.

Among these politicians were persons ambitious and able, who, in scheming for the fall of the Empire, had been prepared to undertake the task of conducting to ends compatible with modern civilization, the revolution they were willing to allow a mob at Paris to commence. The opening of the war necessarily suspended their designs. How completely the events of the 4th September mocked the calculations of their ablest minds, and paralyzed the action of their most energetic spirits, will appear in the conversation I am about to record. It takes place between Victor de Mauléon and the personage to whom he had addressed the letter written on the night before the interview with Louvier, in which Victor had announced his intention of reappearing in Paris in his proper name and rank. I shall designate this correspondent as vaguely as possible; let me call him the Incognito. He may yet play so considerable a part in the history of France as a potent representative of the political philosophy of De Tocqueville—that is, of Liberal principles incompatible with the absolute power either of a sovereign or a populace, and resolutely opposed to experiments on the foundations of civilized society—that it would be unfair to himself and his partisans, if, in a work like this, a word were said that could lead malignant conjecture to his identity with any special chief of the opinions of which I here present him only as a type.

The Incognito, entering Victor's apartment:—

"My dear friend, even if I had not received your telegram, I should have hastened hither on the news of this astounding revolution. It is only in Paris that such a tragedy could be followed by such a farce. You were on the spot—a spectator. Explain it if you can."

De Mauléon.—"I was more than a spectator; I was an actor. Hiss me—I deserve it. When the terrible news from Sedan reached Paris, in the midst of the general stun and bewilderment I noticed a hesitating timidity among all those who had wares in their shops and a good coat on their backs. They feared that to proclaim the Empire defunct would be to install the Red Republic with all its paroxysm of impulsive rage and all its theories of wholesale confiscation. But since it was impossible for the object we had in view to let slip the occasion of deposing the dynasty which stood in its way, it was necessary to lose no time in using the revolutionary part of the populace for that purpose. I assisted in doing so; my excuse is this—that in a time of crisis a man of action must go straight to his immediate object, and in so doing employ the instruments at his command. I made, however, one error in judgment which admits of no excuse, I relied on all I had heard, and all I had observed, of the character of Trochu, and I was deceived, in common, I believe, with all his admirers, and three parts of the educated classes of Paris."

Incognito.—"I should have been equally deceived! Trochu's conduct is a riddle that I doubt if he himself can ever solve. He was master of the position; he had the military force in his hands if he combined with Palikao, which, whatever the jealousies between the two, it was his absolute duty to do. He had a great prestige——"

De Mauléon.—"And for the moment a still greater popularity. His *ipse dixit* could have determined the wavering and confused spirits of the population. I was prepared for his abandonment of the Emperor—even of the Empress and the Regency. But how could I imagine that he, the man of moderate politics, of Orleanistic leanings, the clever writer, the fine talker, the chivalrous soldier, the religious Breton, could abandon everything that was legal, everything that could save France against the enemy, and Paris against the civil discord; that he would connive at the annihilation of the Senate, of the popular Assembly, of every form of Government that could be recognized as legitimate at home or abroad, accept service under men whose doctrines were opposed to all his antecedents, all his professed opinions, and inaugurate a chaos under the name of a Republic!"

Incognito.—"How, indeed? How suppose that the National Assembly, just elected by a majority of seven millions and a half, could be hurried into a conjuring-box, and reappear as the travesty of a Venetian oligarchy, composed of half a dozen of its most unpopular members! The sole excuse for Trochu is, that he deemed all other considerations insignificant compared with the defence of Paris, and the united action of the nation against the invaders.

But if that were his honest desire in siding with this monstrous usurpation of power, he did everything by which the desire could be frustrated. Had there been any provisional body composed of men known and esteemed, elected by the Chambers, supported by Trochu and the troops at his back, there would have been a rallying-point for the patriotism of the provinces; and in the wise suspense of any constitution to succeed that Government until the enemy were chased from the field, all partisans —imperialists, Legitimists, Orleanists, Republicans—would have equally adjourned their differences. But a democratic Republic, proclaimed by a Parisian mob for a nation in which sincere democratic Republicans are a handful, in contempt of an Assembly chosen by the country at large; headed by men in whom the provinces have no trust, and for whom their own representatives are violently chashiered;—can you conceive such a combination of wet blankets supplied by the irony of fate for the extinction of every spark of ardor in the population from which armies are to be gathered in haste, at the beck of usurpers they distrust and despise? Paris has excelled itself in folly. Hungering for peace, it proclaims a Government which has no legal power to treat for it. Shrieking out for allies among the monarches, it annihilates the hope of obtaining them; its sole chance of escape from siege, famine, and bombardment, is in the immediate and impassioned sympathy of the provinces; and it revives all the grudges which the provinces have long sullenly felt against the domineering pretensions of the capital, and invokes the rural populations which comprise the pith and sinew of armies, in the name of men whom I verily believe they detest still more than they do the Prussians. Victor, it is enough to make one despair of his country! All beyond the hour seems anarchy and ruin."

"Not so!" exclaimed De Mauléon. "Everything comes to him who knows how to wait. The Empire is destroyed; the usurpation that follows it has no roots. It will but serve to expedite the establishment of such a condition as we have meditated and planned—a constitution adapted to our age and our people, not based wholly on untried experiments, taking the best from nations that do not allow Freedom and Order to be the sport of any popular breeze. From the American Republic we must borrow the only safeguards against the fickleness of the universal suffrage which, though it was madness to concede in any ancient community, once conceded cannot be safely abolished,—viz., the salutary law that no article of the Constitution once settled, can be altered without the consent of two-thirds of the legislative body. By this law we ensure permanence, and that concomitant love for institutions which is engendered by time and custom. Secondly, the formation of a senate on such principles as may secure to it in all times of danger a confidence and respect which counteract in public opinion the rashness and heat of the popular assembly. On what principles that senate should be formed, with what functions invested, what share of the executive —especially in foreign affairs, declarations of war, or treaties of peace—should be accorded to it, will no doubt need the most deliberate care of the ablest minds. But a senate I thus sketch has alone rescued America from the rashness of counsel incident to a democratic Chamber; and it is still more essential to France, with still more favorable elements for its creation.

"From England we must borrow the great principle that has alone saved her from revolution—that the head of the State can do no wrong. He leads no armies, he presides over no Cabinet. All responsibility rests with his advisers; and where we upset a dynasty, England changes an administration. Whether the head of the State should have the title of sovereign or president, whether he be hereditary or elected, is a question of minor importance impossible now to determine, but on which I heartily concur with you that hereditary monarchy is infinitely better adapted to the habits of Frenchmen, to their love of show and of honors—and infinitely more preservative from all the dangers which result from constant elections to such a dignity, with parties so heated, and pretenders to the rank so numerous—than any principal by which a popular demagogue or a successful general is enabled to destroy the institutions he is elected to guard. On these fundamental doctrines for the regeneration of France I think we are agreed. And I believe when the moment arrives to promulgate them, through an expounder of weight like yourself, they will rapidly commend them-

selves to the intellect of France. For they belong to common-sense; and in the ultimate prevalence of common-sense I have a faith which I refuse to medievalists who would restore the right divine; and still more to fanatical quacks, who imagine that the worship of the Deity, the ties of family, and the rights of property are errors at variance with the progress of society. *Qui vivra, verra.*"

INCOGNITO.—"In the outlines of the policy you so ably enunciate I heartily concur. But if France is, I will not say to be regenerated, but to have fair play among the nations of Europe, I add one or two items to the programme. France must be saved from Paris, not by subterranean barracks and trains, the impotence of which we see to-day with a general in command of the military force, but by conceding to France its proportionate share of the power now monopolized by Paris. All this system of contralization, equally tyrannical and corrupt, must be eradicated. Talk of examples from America, of which I know little—from England, of which I know much—what can we more advantageously borrow from England than that diffusion of all her moral and social power which forbids the congestion of blood in one vital part? Decentralize! decentralize! decentralize! will be my incessant cry, if ever the time comes when my cry will be heard. France can never be a genuine France until Paris has no more influence over the destinies of France than London has over those of England. But on this theme I could go on till midnight. Now to the immediate point: what do you advice me to do in this crisis, and what do you propose to do yourself?"

De Mauléon put his hand to his brow, and remained a few moments silent and thoughtful. At last he looked up with that decided expression of face which was not the least among his many attributes for influence over those with whom he came into contact.

"For you, on whom so much of the future depends, my advice is brief—have nothing to do with the present. All who join in this present mockery of a Government will share the fall that attends it—a fall from which one or two of their body may possibly recover by casting blame on their *confrères*,—you never could. But it is not for you to oppose that Government with an enemy on its march to Paris. You are not a soldier; military command is not in your *rôle*. The issue of events is uncertain; but whatever it be, the men in power cannot conduct a prosperous war nor obtain an honorable peace. Hereafter you may be the *Deus ex machinâ*. No personage of that rank and with that mission appears till the end of the play: we are only in the first act. Leave Paris at once, and abstain from all action."

INCOGNITO, (dejectedly).—"I cannot deny the soundness of your advice, though in accepting it I feel unutterably saddened. Still, you, the calmest, and shrewdest observer among my friends, think there is cause for hope, not despair. Victor, I have more than most men to make life pleasant, but I would lay down life at this moment with you. You know me well enough to be sure that I utter no melodramatic fiction when I say that I love my country as a young man loves the ideal of his dreams—with my whole mind and heart and soul! and the thought that I cannot now aid her in the hour of her mortal trial is—is——"

The man's voice broke down, and he turned aside, veiling his face with a hand that trembled.

DE MAULÉON.—"Courage! patience! All Frenchmen have the first; set them an example they much need in the second. I, too, love my country, though I owe to it little enough, heaven knows. I suppose love of country is inherent in all who are not Internationalists. They profess only to love humanity, by which, if they mean anything practical, they mean a rise in wages."

INCOGNITO (rousing himself, and with a half-smile).—"Always cynical, Victor—always belying yourself. But now that you have advised my course, what will be your own? Accompany me, and wait for better times."

"No, noble friend; our positions are different. Yours is made—mine yet to make. But for this war I think I could have secured a seat in the Chamber. As I wrote you, I found that my kinsfolk were of much influence in their department, and that my restitution to my social grade, and the repute I had made as an Orleanist, inclined them to forget my youthful errors and to assist my career. But he Chamber ceases to exist. My journal I shall drop. I cannot support the Government;

it is not a moment to oppose it. My prudent course is silence."

INCOGNITO.—"But is not your journal essential to your support?"

DE MAULÉON.—"Fortunately not. Its profits enabled me to lay by for the rainy day that has come; and having reimbursed you and all friends the sums necessary to start it, I stand clear of all debt, and for my slender wants, a rich man. If I continued the journal I should be beggared; for there would be no readers to 'Common Sense' in this interval of lunacy. Nevertheless, during this interval, I trust to other ways for winning a name that will open my rightful path of ambition whenever we again have a legislature in which 'Common Sense' can be heard."

INCOGNITO.—"But how win that name, silenced as a writer?"

DE MAULÉON.—"You forget that I have fought in Algeria. In a few days Paris will be in a state of siege; and then—and then," he added, and very quietly dilated on the renown of a patriot or the grave of a soldier.

"I envy you the chance of either," said the Incognito; and after a few more brief words he departed, his hat drawn over his brows, and entering a hired carriage which he had left at the corner of the quiet street, was consigned to the station du——, just in time for the next train.

CHAPTER XI.

VICTOR dressed and went out. The streets were crowded. Workmen were everywhere employed in the childish operation of removing all insignia, and obliterating all names that showed where an Empire had existed. One greasy citizen, mounted on a ladder, was effacing the words "Boulevard Haussman," and substituting for Haussman, "Victor Hugo."

Suddenly De Mauléon came on a group of blouses, interspersed with women holding babies and ragged boys holding stones, collected round a well-dressed slender man, at whom they were hooting and gesticulating, with menaces of doing something much worse. By an easy effort of his strong frame the Vicomte pushed his way through the tormentors, and gave his arm to their intended victim.

"Monsieur, allow me to walk home with you."

Therewith the shrieks and shouts and gesticulations increased. "Another impertinent! Another traitor! Drown him! Drown them both! To the Seine! To the Seine!" A burly fellow rushed forward, and the rest made a plunging push. The outstretched arm of De Mauléon kept the ringleader at bay. "*Mes enfans*," cried Victor with a calm clear voice, "I am not an Imperialist. Many of you have read the articles signed Pierre Firmin, written against the tyrant Bonaparte when he was at the height of his power. I am Pierre Firmin—make way for me." Probably not one in the crowd had ever read a word written by Pierre Firmin, nor even heard of the name. But they did not like to own ignorance; and that burly fellow did not like to encounter that arm of iron which touched his throat. So he cried out, "Oh! if you are the great Pierre Firmin, that alters the case. Make way for the patriot Pierre." "But," shrieked a virago, thrusting her baby into De Mauléon's face, "the other is the Imperialist, the capitalist, the vile Duplessis. At least we will have him." De Mauléon suddenly snatched the baby from her, and said, with imperturbable good temper, "Exchange of prisoners! I resign the man, and I keep the baby."

No one who does not know the humors of a Parisian mob can comprehend the suddenness of popular change, or the magical mastery over crowds which is effected by quiet courage and a ready joke. The group was appeased at once. Even the virago laughed; and when De Mauléon restored the infant to her arms, with a gold piece thrust into its tiny clasp, she eyed the gold, and cried, "God bless you, citizen!" The two gentlemen made their way safely now.

"M. De Mauléon," said Duplessis, "I know not how to thank you. Without your seasonable aid I should have been in great danger of life; and—would you believe it?—the woman who denounced and set the mob on me was one of the objects of a charity which I weekly dispense to the poor."

"Of course I believe that. At the Red clubs no crime is more denounced than that of charity. It is the 'fraud against *Egalité*'—a vile trick of the capitalists to save to himself the millions he ought to share with all by

giving a *sou* to one. Meanwhile, take my advice, M. Duplesssis, and quit Paris with your young daughter. This is no place for rich Imperialists at present."

"I perceived that before to-day's adventure. I distrust the looks of my very servants, and shall depart with Valérie this evening for Bretagne."

"Ah! I heard from Louvier that you propose to pay off his mortgage on Rochebriant, and make yourself sole proprietor of my young kinsman's property."

"I trust you only believe half what you hear. I mean to save Rochebriant from Louvier, and consign it free of charge to your kinsman, as the *dot* of his bride, my daughter."

"I rejoice to learn such good news for the head of my house. But Alain himself—is he not with the prisoners of war?"

"No, thank Heaven. He went forth an officer of a regiment of Parisian Mobiles—went full of sanguine confidence; he came back with his regiment in mournful despondency. The undiscipline of his regiment, of the Parisian Mobiles generally, appears incredible. Their insolent disobedience to their officers, their ribald scoffs at their general—oh, it is sickening to speak of it! Alain distinguished himself by repressing a mutiny, and is honored by a signal compliment from the commander in a letter of recommendation to Palikao. But Palikao is nobody now. Alain has already been sent into Bretagne, commissioned to assist in organizing a corps of Mobiles in his neighborhood. Trochu, as you know, is a Breton. Alain is confident of the good conduct of the Bretons. What will Louvier do? He is an arch Republican; is he pleased now he has got what he wanted?"

"I suppose he is pleased, for he is terribly frightened. Fright is one of the great enjoyments of a Parisian. Good day. Your path to your hotel is clear now. Remember me kindly to Alain."

De Mauléon continued his way through streets sometimes deserted, sometimes thronged. At the commencement of the Rue St. Florentin he encountered the brothers Vandemar walking arm in arm.

"Ha, De Mauléon!" cried Enguerrand; "what is the last minute's news?"

"I can't guess. Nobody knows at Paris how soon one folly swallows up another. Saturn here is always devouring one or other of his children."

"They say that Vinoy, after a most masterly retreat, is almost at our gates with 80,000 men."

"And this day twelvemonth we may know what he does with them."

Here Raoul, who seemed absorbed in gloomy reflections, halted before the hotel in which the Comtesse di Rimini lodged, and with a nod to his brother, and a polite, if not cordial salutation to Victor, entered the *porte cochère*.

"Your brother seems out of spirits—a pleasing contrast to the uproarious mirth with which Parisians welcome the advance of calamity."

"Raoul, as you know, is deeply religious. He regards the defeat we have sustained, and the peril that threatens us, as the beginning of a divine chastisement, justly incurred by our sins—I mean, the sins of Paris. In vain my father reminds him of Voltaire's story, in which the ship goes down with a *fripon* on board. In order to punish the *fripon*, the honest folks are drowned."

"Is your father going to remain on board the ship, and share the fate of the other honest folks?"

"*Pas si bête.* He is off to Dieppe for sea-bathing. He says that Paris has grown so dirty since the 4th September, that it is only fit for the feet of the unwashed. He wished my mother to accompany him; but she replies, 'No; there are already too many wounded not to need plenty of nurses.' She is assisting to inaugurate a society of ladies in aid of the *Sœurs de Charité*. Like Raoul, she is devout, but she has not his superstitions. Still his superstitions are the natural reaction of a singularly earnest and pure nature from the frivolity and corruption which, when kneaded well up together with a slice of sarcasm, Paris calls philosophy."

"And what, my dear Enguerrand, do you propose to do?"

"That depends on whether we are really besieged. If so, of course I become a soldier."

"I hope not a National Guard?"

"I care not in what name I fight, so that I fight for France."

As Enguerrand said these simple words, his whole countenance seemed changed. The crest rose; the eyes sparkled; the fair and delicate beauty which had made him the dar-

ling of women—the joyous sweetness of expression and dainty grace of high breeding which made him the most popular companion to men,—were exalted in a masculine nobleness of aspect, from which a painter might have taken hints for a study of the young Achilles separated for ever from effeminate companionship at the sight of the weapons of war. De Mauléon gazed on him admiringly. We have seen that he shared the sentiments uttered—had resolved on the same course of action. But it was with the tempered warmth of a man who seeks to divest his thoughts and his purpose of the ardor of romance, and who, in serving his country, calculates on the gains to his own ambition. Nevertheless, he admired in Enguerrand the image of his own impulsive and fiery youth.

"And you, I presume," resumed Enguerrand, "will fight too, but rather with pen than with sword."

"Pens will now only be dipped in red ink, and common-sense never writes in that color; as for the sword, I have passed the age of forty-five, at which military service halts. But if some experience in active service, some knowledge of the art by which soldiers are disciplined and led, will be deemed sufficient title to a post of command, however modest the grade be, I shall not be wanting among the defenders of Paris."

"My brave dear Vicomte, if you are past the age to serve, you are in the ripest age to command; and with the testimonials and the cross you won in Algeria, your application for employment will be received with gratitude by any general so able as Trochu.

"I don't know whether I shall apply to Trochu. I would rather be elected to command even by the Mobiles or the National Guard, of whom I have just spoken disparagingly; and no doubt both corps will soon claim and win the right to choose their officers. But if elected, no matter by whom, I shall make a preliminary condition; the men under me shall train, and drill, and obey,—soldiers of a very different kind from the youthful Pekins nourished on absinthe and self-conceit, and applauding that Bombastes Furioso, M. Hugo, when he assures the enemy that Paris will draw an idea from its scabbard. But here comes Savarin. *Bon jour*, my dear poet."

"Don't say good day. An evil day for journalists and writers who do not out-Herod Blanqui and Pyat. I know not how I shall get bread and cheese. My poor suburban villa is to be pulled down by way of securing Paris; my journal will be suppressed by way of establishing the liberty of the press. It ventured to suggest that the people of France should have some choice in the form of their government."

"That was very indiscreet, my poor Savarin," said Victor; "I wonder your printing-office has not been pulled down. We are now at the moment when wise men hold their tongues."

"Perhaps so, M. de Mauléon. It might have been wiser for all of us, you as well as myself, if we had not allowed our tongues to be so free before this moment arrived. We live to learn; and if we ever have what may be called a passable government again, in which we may say pretty much what we like, there is one thing I will not do, I will not undermine that government without seeing a very clear way to the government that is to follow it. What say you, Pierre Firmin?"

"Frankly, I say that I deserve your rebuke," answered De Mauléon, thoughtfully. "But, of course, you are going to take or send Madame Savarin out of Paris."

"Certainly. We have made a very pleasant party for our hegira this evening—among others the Morleys. Morley is terribly disgusted. A Red Republican slapped him on the shoulder and said, 'American, we have a republic as well as you.' 'Pretty much you know about republics,' growled Morley: 'a French republic is as much like ours as a baboon is like a man.' On which the Red roused the mob, who dragged the American off to the nearest station of the National Guard, where he was accused of being a Prussian spy. With some difficulty, and lots of brag about the sanctity of the stars and stripes, he escaped with a reprimand, and caution how to behave himself in future. So he quits a city in which there no longer exists freedom of speech. My wife hoped to induce Mademoiselle Cicogna to accompany us; I grieve to say she refuses. You know she is engaged in marriage to Gustave Rameau; and his mother dreads the effect that these Red Clubs and his own vanity may have upon his excitable temperament if the influence of Mademoiselle Cicogna be withdrawn."

"How could a creature so exquisite as Isaura Cicogna ever find fascination in Gustave Rameau!" exclaimed Enguerrand.

"A woman like her," answered De Mauléon, "always finds a fascination in self-sacrifice."

"I think you divine the truth," said Savarin, rather mournfully. "But I must bid you good-bye. May we live to shake hands *réunis sous de meilleurs auspices.*"

Here Savarin hurried off, and the other two men strolled into the Champs Elysées, which were crowded with loungers, gay and careless, as if there had been no disaster at Sedan, no overthrow of an empire, no enemy on its road to Paris.

In fact the Parisians, at once the most incredulous and the most credulous of all populations, believed that the Prussians would never be so impertinent as to come in sight of the gates. Something would occur to stop them! The king had declared he did not war on Frenchmen, but on the Emperor: the Emperor gone, the war was over. A democratic republic was instituted. A horrible thing in its way, it is true; but how could the Pandour tyrant brave the infection of democratic doctrines among his own barbarian armies? Were not placards, addressed to our "German brethren," posted upon the walls of Paris, exhorting the Pandours to fraternize with their fellow-creatures? Was not Victor Hugo going to publish "a letter to the German people?" Had not Jules Favre graciously offered peace, with the assurance that "France would not cede a stone of her fortresses—an inch of her territory? She would pardon the invaders, and not march upon Berlin!" To all these, and many more such incontestable proofs, that the idea of a siege was moonshine, did Enguerrand and Victor listen as they joined group after group of their fellow-countrymen: nor did Paris cease to harbor such pleasing illusions, amusing itself with piously laying crowns at the foot of the statue of Strasbourg, swearing "they would be worthy of their Alsatian brethren," till on the 19th of September the last telegram was received, and Paris was cut off from the rest of the world by the iron line of the Prussian invaders. "Tranquil and terrible," says Victor Hugo, "she awaits the invasion! A volcano needs no assistance."

CHAPTER XII.

We left Graham Vane slowly recovering from the attack of fever which had arrested his journey to Berlin in quest of the Count von Rudesheim. He was, however, saved the prosecution of that journey, and his direction turned back to France by a German newspaper which informed that the King of Prussia was at Rheims, and that the Count von Rudesheim was among the eminent personages gathered there around their sovereign. In conversing the same day with the kindly doctor who attended him, Graham ascertained that this German noble held a high command in the German armies, and bore a no less distinguished reputation as a wise political counsellor than he had earned as a military chief. As soon as he was able to travel, and indeed before the good doctor sanctioned his departure, Graham took his pay to Rheims, uncertain, however, whether the Count would still be found there. I spare the details of his journey, interesting as they were. On reaching the famous, and in the eyes of Legitimists the sacred city, the Englishman had no difficulty in ascertaining the house, not far from the cathedral, in which the Count von Rudesheim had taken his temporary abode. Walking toward it from the small hotel in which he had been lucky enough to find a room disengaged—slowly, for he was still feeble—he was struck by the quiet conduct of the German soldiery, and, save in their appearance, the peaceful aspect of the streets. Indeed there was an air of festive gaiety about the place, as in an English town in which some popular regiment is quartered. The German soldiers thronged the shops, buying largely; lounged into the *cafés;* here and there attempted flirtations with the *grisettes,* who laughed at their French and blushed at their compliments; and in their good-humored, somewhat bashful cheeriness, there was no trace of the insolence of conquest.

But as Graham neared the precincts of the cathedral his ear caught a grave and solemn music, which he at first supposed to come from within the building. But as he paused and looked round, he saw a group of the German military, on whose stalwart forms and fair manly earnest faces the setting sun cast its calm lingering rays. They were chanting, in voices not loud but deep, Luther's majestic

hymn, "*Nun danket alle Gott.*" The chant awed even the ragged beggar boys who had followed the Englishman, as they followed any stranger, would have followed King William himself, whining for alms. "What a type of the difference between the two nations!" thought Graham; "the Marseillaise, and Luther's Hymn!" While thus meditating and listening, a man in a general's uniform came slowly out of the cathedral, with his hands clasped behind his back, and his head bent slightly downwards. He, too, paused on hearing the hymn; then unclasped his hand and beckoned to one of the officers, to whom approaching he whispered a word or two, and passed on towards the Episcopal palace. The hymn hushed, and the singers quietly dispersed. Graham divined rightly that the general had thought a hymn thanking the God of battles might wound the feelings of the inhabitants of the vanquished city—not, however, that any of them were likely to understand the language in which the thanks were uttered. Graham followed the measured steps of the general, whose hands were again clasped behind his back—the musing habit of Von Moltke, as it had been of Napoleon the First.

Continuing his way, the Englishman soon reached the house in which the Count von Rudesheim was lodged, and sending in his card, was admitted at once through an anteroom in which sate two young men, subaltern officers, apparently employed in draughting maps, into the presence of the Count.

"Pardon me," said Graham, after the conventional salutation, "if I interrupt you for a moment or so in the midst of events so grave, on a matter that must seem to you very trivial."

"Nay," answered the Count, "there is nothing so trivial in this world but what there will be some one to whom it is important. Say how I can serve you."

"I think, M. le Comte, that you once received in your household, as a teacher or governess, a French lady, Madame Marigny."

"Yes, I remember her well—a very handsome woman. My wife and daughter took great interest in her. She was married out of my house."

"Exactly—and to whom?"

"An Italian of good birth, who was then employed by the Austrian Government in some minor post, and subsequently promoted to a better one in the Italian dominion, which then belonged to the house of Hapsburg, after which we lost sight of him and his wife."

"An Italian—what was his name?"

"Ludovico Cicogna."

"Cicogna!" exclaimed Graham, turning very pale. "Are you sure that was the name?"

"Certainly. He was a cadet of a very noble house, and disowned by relations too patriotic to forgive him for accepting employment under the Austrian Government."

"Can you not give me the address of the place in Italy to which he was transferred on leaving Austria?"

"No; but if the information be necessary to you, it can be obtained easily at Milan, where the head of the family resides, or indeed in Vienna, through any ministerial bureau."

"Pardon me one or two questions more. Had Madame Marigny any children by a former husband?"

"Not that I know of: I never heard so. Signor Cicogna was a widower, and had, if I remember right, children by his first wife, who was also a Frenchwoman. Before he obtained office in Austria, he resided, I believe, in France. I do not remember how many children he had by his first wife. I never saw them. Our acquaintance began at the baths of Töplitz, where he saw and fell violently in love with Madame Marigny. After their marriage, they went to his post, which was somewhere, I think, in the Tyrol. We saw no more of them; but my wife and daughter kept up a correspondence with the Signora Cicogna for a short time. It ceased altogether when she removed into Italy."

"You do not even know if the Signora is still living?"

"No."

"Her husband, I am told, is dead."

"Indeed! I am concerned to hear it. A good-looking, lively, clever man. I fear he must have lost all income when the Austrian dominions passed to the house of Savoy."

"Many thanks for your information. I can detain you no longer," said Graham, rising.

"Nay, I am not very busy at this moment; but I fear we Germans have plenty of work on our hands."

"I had hoped that, now the French Emperor, against whom your king made war, was set aside, his Prussian majesty would make peace with the French people."

"Most willingly would he do so if the French people would let him. But it must be through a French Government legally chosen by the people. And they have chosen none! A mob at Paris sets up a provisional administration, that commences by declaring that it will not give up 'an inch of its territory nor a stone of its fortesses.' No terms of peace can be made with such men holding such talk." After a few words more over the state of public affairs,—in which Graham expressd the English side of affairs, which was all for generosity to the vanquished; and the Count argued much more ably on the German, which was all for security against the aggressions of a people that would not admit itself to be vanquished,—the short interview closed.

As Graham at night pursued his journey to Vienna, there came into his mind Isaura's song of the Neapolitan fisherman. Had he, too, been blind to the image on the rock? Was it possible that all the while he had been resisting the impulse of his heart, until the discharge of the mission entrusted to him freed his choice and decided his fortunes, the very person of whom he was in search had been before him, then to be for ever won, lost to him now for ever? Could Isaura Cicogna be the child of Louise Duval by Richard King? She could not have been her child by Cicogna: the dates forbade that hypothesis. Isaura must have been five years old when Louise married the Italian.

Arrived at Milan, Graham quickly ascertained that the post to which Ludovico Cicogna had been removed was in Verona, and that he had there died eight years ago. Nothing was to be learned as to his family or his circumstances at the time of his death. The people of whose history we know the least are the relations we refuse to acknowledge. Graham continued his journey to Verona. There he found on inquiry that the Cicognas had occupied an apartment in a house which stood at the outskirts of the town, and had been since pulled down to make way for some public improvements. But his closest inquiries could gain him no satisfactory answers to the all-important questions as to Ludovico Cicogna's family. His political alienation from the Italian cause, which was nowhere more ardently espoused than at Verona, had rendered him very unpopular.

He visited at no Italian houses. Such society as he had was confined to the Austrian military within the Quadrilateral or at Venice, to which city he made frequent excursions: was said to lead there a free and gay life, very displeasing to the Signora, whom he left in Verona. She was but little seen, and faintly remembered as very handsome and proud-looking. Yes, there were children—a girl, and a boy several years younger than the girl; but whether she was the child of the Signora by a former marriage, or whether the Signora was only the child's stepmother, no one could say. The usual clue, in such doubtful matters, obtainable through servants, was here missing. The Cicognas had only kept two servants, and both were Austrian subjects, who had long left the country—their very names forgotten.

Graham now called to mind the Englishman Selby, for whom Isaura had such grateful affection, as supplying to her the place of her father. This must have been the Englishman whom Louise Duval had married after Cicogna's death. It would be no difficult task, surely, to ascertain where he had resided. Easy enough to ascertain all that Graham wanted to know from Isaura herself, if a letter could reach her. But, as he knew by the journals, Paris was now invested—cut off from all communication with the world beyond. Too irritable, anxious, and impatient to wait for the close of the siege, though he never suspected it could last so long as it did, he hastened to Venice, and there learned through the British consul that the late Mr. Selby was a learned antiquarian, an accomplished general scholar, a *fanatico* in music, a man of gentle temper though reserved manners; had at one time lived much at Venice: after his marriage with the Signora Cicogna he had taken up his abode near Florence. To Florence Graham now went. He found the villa on the skirts of Fiesole at which Mr. Selby had resided. The peasant who had officiated as gardener and shareholder in the profits of vines and figs, was still, with his wife, living on the place. Both man and wife remembered the *Inglese* well; spoke of him with great affection, of his

wife with great dislike. They said her manners were very haughty, her temper very violent; that she led the *Inglese* a very unhappy life; that there were a girl and a boy, both hers by a former marriage; but when closely questioned whether they were sure that the girl was the Signora's child by the former husband, or whether she was not the child of that husband by a former wife, they could not tell; they could only say that both were called by the same name—Cicogna; that the boy was the Signora's favorite—that indeed she seemed wrapt up in him; that he died of a rapid decline a few months after Mr. Selby had hired the place, and that shortly after his death the Signora left the place and never returned to it; that it was little more than a year that she had lived with her husband before this final separation took place. The girl remained with Mr. Selby, who cherished and loved her as his own child. Her Christian name was Isaura, the boy's Luigi. A few years later, Mr. Selby left the villa and went to Naples, where they heard he had died. They could give no information as to what had become of his wife. Since the death of her boy that lady had become very much changed—her spirits quite broken, no longer violent. She would sit alone and weep bitterly. The only person out of her family she would receive was the priest; till the boy's death she had never seen the priest, nor been known to attend divine service.

"Was the priest living?"

"Oh no; he had been dead two years A most excellent man—a saint," said the peasant's wife.

"Good priests are like good women," said the peasant, drily; "there are plenty of them, but they are all underground."

On which remark the wife tried to box his ears. The *contadino* had become a free-thinker since the accession of the house of Savoy. His wife remained a good Catholic.

Said the peasant as, escaping from his wife, he walked into the high-road with Graham. "My belief, *Eccellenza*, is, that the priest did all the mischief."

"What mischief?"

"Persuaded the Signora to leave her husband. The *Inglese* was not a Catholic. I heard the priest call him a heretic. And the *Padre*, who, though not so bad as some of his cloth, was a meddling bigot, thought it perhaps best for her soul that it should part company with a heretic's person. I can't say for sure, but I think that was it. The *Padre* seemed to triumph when the Signora was gone."

Graham mused. The peasant's supposition was not improbable. A woman such as Louise Duval appeared to be—of vehement passions and ill-regulated mind—was just one of those who, in a moment of great sorrow, and estranged from the ordinary household affections, feel, though but imperfectly, the necessity of a religion, and, ever in extremes, pass at once from indifferentism into superstition.

Arrived at Naples, Graham heard little of Selby except as a literary recluse, whose only distraction from books was the operatic stage. But he heard much of Isaura; of the kindness which Madame de Grantmesnil had shown to her, when left by Selby's death alone in the world; of the interest which the friendship and the warm eulogies of one so eminent as the great French writer had created for Isaura in the artistic circles; of the intense sensation her appearance, her voice, her universal genius, had made in that society, and the brilliant hopes of her subsequent career on the stage the *cognoscenti* had formed. No one knew anything of her mother; no one entertained a doubt that Isaura was by birth a Cicogna. Graham could not learn the present whereabouts of Madame de Grantmesnil. She had long left Naples, and had been last heard of at Genoa; was supposed to have returned to France a little before the war. In France she had no fixed residence.

The simplest mode of obtaining authentic information whether Isaura was the daughter of Ludovico Cicogna by his first wife—namely, by registration of her birth—failed him; because, as Von Rudesheim had said, his first wife was a Frenchwoman. The children had been born somewhere in France, no one could even guess where. No one had ever seen the first wife, who had never appeared in Italy, nor had even heard what was her maiden name.

Graham, meanwhile, was not aware that Isaura was still in the besieged city, whether or not already married to Gustave Rameau; so large a number of the women had quitted Paris before the siege began, that he had reason to hope she was among them. He heard through an American that the Morleys had gone to England before the Prussian in-

vestment; perhaps Isaura had gone with them. He wrote to Mrs. Morley, enclosing his letter to the Minister of the United States at the Court of St. James's, and while still at Naples received her answer. It was short and malignantly bitter. "Both myself and Madame Savarin, backed by Signora Venosta, earnestly entreated Mademoiselle Cicogna to quit Paris, to accompany us to England. Her devotion to her affianced husband would not permit her to listen to us. It is only an Englishman who could suppose Isaura Cicogna to be one of those women who do not insist on sharing the perils of those they love. You ask whether she was the daughter of Ludovico Cicogna by his former marriage, or of his second wife by him. I cannot answer. I don't even know whether Signor Cicogna ever had a former wife. Isaura Cicogna never spoke to me of her parents. Permit me to ask what business is it of yours now? Is it the English pride that makes you wish to learn whether on both sides she is of noble family? How can that discovery alter your relations towards the affianced bride of another?"

On receipt of this letter, Graham quitted Naples, and shortly afterwards found himself at Versailles. He obtained permission to establish himself there, though the English were by no means popular. Thus near to Isaura, thus sternly separated from her, Graham awaited the close of the siege. Few among those at Versailles believed that the Parisians would endure it much longer. Surely they would capitulate before the bombardment, which the Germans themselves disliked to contemplate as a last resource, could commence.

In his own mind Graham was convinced that Isaura was the child of Richard King. It seemed to him probable that Louise Duval, unable to assign any real name to the daughter of the marriage she disowned,—neither the name borne by the repudiated husband, nor her own maiden name,—would, on taking her daughter to her new home, have induced Cicogna to give the child his name or that after Cicogna's death she herself had so designated the girl. A dispassionate confidant, could Graham have admitted any confidant whatever, might have suggested the more than equal probability that Isaura was Cicogna's daughter by his former espousal. But then what could have become of Richard King's child? To part with the fortune in his hands, to relinquish all the ambitious dreams which belonged to it, cost Graham Vane no pang: but he writhed with indignant grief when he thought that the wealth of Richard King's heiress was to pass to the hands of Gustave Rameau—that this was to be the end of his researches—this the result of the sacrifice his sense of honor imposed on him.

And now that there was the probability that he must convey to Isaura this large inheritance, the practical difficulty of inventing some reason for such a donation, which he had, while at a distance, made light of, became seriously apparent. How could he say to Isaura that he had £200,000 in trust for her without naming any one so devising it? Still more, how constitute himself her guardian, so as to secure it to herself, independently of her husband? Perhaps Isaura was too infatuated with Rameau, or too romantically unselfish, to permit the fortune so mysteriously conveyed being exclusively appropriated to herself. And if she were already married to Rameau, and if he were armed with the right to inquire into the source of this fortune, how exposed to the risks of disclosure would become the secret Graham sought to conceal. Such a secret affecting the memory of the sacred dead, affixing a shame on the scutcheon of the living, in the irreverent hands of a Gustave Rameau—it was too dreadful to contemplate such a hazard. And yet, if Isaura were the missing heiress, could Graham Vane admit any excuse for basely withholding from her, for coolly retaining to himself, the wealth for which he was responsible? Yet, torturing as were these communings with himself, they were mild in their torture compared to the ever-growing anguish of the thought that in any case the only woman he had ever loved — ever could love — who might but for his own scruples and prejudices have been the partner of his life—was perhaps now actually the wife of another and, as such, in what terrible danger! Famine within the walls of the doomed city: without, the engines of death waiting for a signal. So near to her, and yet so far! So willing to die for her, if for her he could not live: and with all his devotion, all his intellect, all his wealth so powerless!

CHAPTER XIII.

It is now the middle of November—a Sunday. The day has been mild, and is drawing towards its close. The Parisians have been enjoying the sunshine. Under the leafless trees in the public gardens and the Champs Elyseés children have been at play. On the Boulevards the old elegance of gaiety is succeeded by a livelier animation. Itinerant musicians gather round them ragged groups. Fortune-tellers are in great request, especially among the once brilliant Laises and Thaises, now looking more shabby, to whom they predict the speedy restoration of Nabobs and Russians, and golden joys. Yonder Punch is achieving a victory over the Evil One, who wears the Prussian spiked helmet, and whose face has been recently beautified into a resemblance to Bismarck. Punch draws to his show a laughing audience of *Moblots* and recruits to the new companies of the National Guard. Members of the once formidable police, now threadbare and hunger-pinched, stand side by side with unfortunate beggars and sinister-looking patriots who have served their time in the jails or galleys.

Uniforms of all variety are conspicuous—the only evidence visible of an enemy at the walls. But the aspects of the wearers of warlike accoutrements are *débonnaire* and smiling, as of revellers on a holiday of peace. Among these defenders of their country, at the door of a crowded *café*, stands Frederic Lemercier, superb in the costume, bran-new, of a National Guard—his dog Fox tranquilly reposing on its haunches, with eyes fixed upon its fellow-dog philosophically musing on the edge of Punch's show, whose master is engaged in the conquest of the Bismarch fiend.

"Lemercier," cried the Vicomte de Brézé, approaching the *café*, "I scarcely recognize you in that martial guise. You look *magnifique*—the *galons* become you. *Peste!* an officer already?"

"The National Guards and Mobiles are permitted to choose their own officers, as you are aware. I have been elected, but to subaltern grade, by the warlike patriots of my department. Enguerrand de Vandemar is elected a captain of the Mobiles in his, and Victor de Mauléon is appointed to the command of a battalion of the National Guards. But I soar above jealousy at such a moment,—

'Rome a choisi mon bras; je n'examine rien.'

"You have no right to be jealous. De Mauléon has had experience and won distinction in actual service, and from all I hear is doing wonders with his men—has got them not only to keep but to love drill. I heard no less an authority than General V——say that if all the officers of the National Guard were like De Mauléon, that body would give an example of discipline to the line."

"I say nothing as to the promotion of a real soldier like the Vicomte—but a Parisian dandy like Enguerrand de Vandemar!"

"You forget that Enguerrand received a military education—an advantage denied to you."

"What does that matter? Who cares for education nowadays? Besides, have I not been training ever since the 4th of September, to say nothing of the hard work on the ramparts?"

"*Parlez moi de cela:* it is indeed hard work on the ramparts. *Infandum dolorem quorum pars magna fui.* Take the day duty. What with rising at seven o'clock, and being drilled between a middle-aged and corpulent grocer on one side and a meagre beardless barber's apprentice on the other; what with going to the bastions at eleven, and seeing half one's companions drunk before twelve; what with trying to keep their fists off one's face when one politely asks them not to call one's general a traitor or a poltroon,—the work of the ramparts would be insupportable, if I did not take a pack of cards with me, and enjoy a quiet rubber with three other heroes in some sequestered corner. As for night work, nothing short of the indomitable fortitude of a Parisian could sustain it; the tents made expressly not to be waterproof, like the groves of the Muses,—

'per
Quos et aquæ subeant et auræ.'

A fellow-companion of mine tucks himself up on my rug, and pillows his head on my knapsack. I remonstrate—he swears—the other heroes wake up and threaten to thrash us both; and just when peace is made, and one hopes for a wink of sleep, a detachment of spectators, chiefly *gamins*, coming to see that all is safe in the camp, strike up the Marseil-

laise. Ah, the world will ring to the end of time with the sublime attitude of Paris in the face of the Vandal invaders, especially when it learns that the very shoes we stand in are made of cardboard. In vain we complain. The contractor for shoes is a staunch Republican, and jobs by right divine. May I ask if you have dined yet?"

"Heavens! no, it is too early. But I am excessively hungry. I had only a quarter of jugged cat for breakfast, and the brute was tough. In reply to your question, may I put another—Did you lay in plenty of stores?"

"Stores? no; I am a bachelor, and rely on the stores of my married friends."

"Poor De Brézé! I sympathize with you, for I am in the same boat, and dinner invitations have become monstrous rare."

"Oh, but you are so confoundedly rich! What to you are forty francs for a rabbit, or eighty francs for a turkey?"

"Well, I suppose I am rich, but I have no money, and the ungrateful *restaurants* will not give me credit. They don't believe in better days."

"How can *you* want money?"

"Very naturally. I had invested my capital famously—the best speculations—partly in house rents, partly in company shares; and houses pay no rents, and nobody will buy company shares. I had 1000 napoleons on hand it is true, when Duplessis left Paris—much more, I thought, than I could possibly need, for I never believed in the siege. But during the first few weeks I played at whist with bad luck, and since then so many old friends have borrowed of me that I doubt if I have 200 francs left. I have despatched four letters to Duplessis by pigeon and balloon entreating him to send me 25,000 francs by some trusty fellow who will pierce the Prussian lines. I have had two answers—1st, that he will find a man; 2nd, that the man is found and on his way. Trust to that man, my dear friend, and meanwhile lend me 200 francs."

"*Mon cher, désolé* to refuse; but I was about to ask you to share your 200 francs with me who live chiefly by my pen; and that resource is cut off. Still *il faut vivre*—one must dine."

"That is a fact, and we will dine together to-day at my expense, limited liability, though—eight francs a head."

"Generous Monsieur, I accept. Meanwhile let us take a turn towards the Madeleine."

The two Parisians quit the *café*, and proceed up the Boulevard. On their way they encounter Savarin. "Why," said De Brézé, "I thought you had left Paris with Madame."

"So I did, and deposited her safely with the Morleys at Boulogne. These kind Americans were going to England, and they took her with them. But *I* quit Paris! I! No: I am old; I am growing obese. I have always been shortsighted. I can neither wield a sword nor handle a musket. But Paris needs defenders; and every moment I was away from her I sighed to myself '*Il faut être là!*' I returned before the Vandals had possessed themselves of our railways, the *convoi* overcrowded with men like myself, who had removed wives and families; and when we asked each other why we went back, every answer was the same, '*Il faut être là.*' No, poor child, no—I have nothing to give you."

These last words were addressed to a woman young and handsome, with a dress that a few weeks ago might have been admired for taste and elegance by the lady leaders of the *ton*, but was now darned, and dirty, and draggled.

"Monsieur, I did not stop you to ask for alms. You do not seem to remember me, M. Savarin."

"But I do," said Lemercier, "surely I address Mademoiselle Julie Caumartin."

"Ah, excuse me, *le petit* Frederic," said Julie, with a sickly attempt at coquettish sprightliness; "I had no eyes except for M. Savarin."

"And why only for me, my poor child?" asked the kind-hearted author.

"Hush!" She drew him aside. "Because you can give me news of that monster Gustave. It is not true, it cannot be true, that he is going to be married?"

"Nay, surely, Mademoiselle, all connection between you and young Rameau has ceased for months—ceased from the date of that illness in July which nearly carried him off."

"I resigned him to the care of his mother," said the girl; "but when he no longer needs a mother, he belongs to me. Oh, consider, M. Savarin, for his sake I refused the most splendid offers! When he sought me, I had my *coupé*, my opera-box, my *cachemires*, my jewels. The Russians—the English—vied for my

smiles. But I loved the man. I never loved before: I shall never love again; and after the sacrifices I have made for him, nothing shall induce me to give him up. Tell me, I entreat, my dear M. Savarin, where he is hiding. He has left the parental roof, and they refused there to give me his address."

"My poor girl, don't be *méchante*. It is quite true that Gustave Rameau is engaged to be married; and any attempt of yours to create scandal——"

"Monsieur," interrupted Julie, vehemently, "don't talk to me about scandal! The man is mine, and no one else shall have him. His address?"

"Mademoiselle," cried Savarin angrily, "find it out for yourself." Then—repentant of rudeness to one so young and so desolate—he added, in mild expostulatory accents: "Come, come, *ma belle enfant*, be reasonable: Gustave is no loss. He is reduced to poverty."

"So much the better. When he was well off I never cost him more than a supper at the Maison Dorée; and if he is poor he shall marry me, and I will support him?"

"You!—and how?"

"By my profession when peace comes; and meanwhile I have offers from a *café* to recite warlike songs. Ah! you shake your head incredulously. The ballet-dancer recite verses?

Yes! *he* taught me to recite his own *Soyez bon pour moi*, M. Savarin! do say where I can find *mon homme*."

"No."

"That is you last word?"

"It is."

The girl drew her thin shawl round her and hurried off. Savarin rejoined his friends. "Is that the way you console yourself for the absence of Madame?" asked De Brézé, drily.

"Fie!" cried Savarin, indignantly; "such bad jokes are ill-timed. What strange mixtures of good and bad, of noble and base, every stratum of Paris life contains! There is that poor girl, in one way contemptible, no doubt, and yet in another way she has an element of grandeur. On the whole, at Paris, the women, with all their faults, are of finer mould than the men."

"French gallantry has always admitted that truth," said Lemercier. "Fox, Fox, Fox." Uttering this cry, he darted forward after the dog, who had strayed a few yards to salute another dog led by a string, and caught the animal in his arms. "Pardon me," he exclaimed, returning to his friends, "but there are so many snares for dogs at present. They are just coming into fashion for roasts, and Fox is so plump."

"I thought," said Savarin, "that it was resolved at all the sporting clubs that, be the pinch of famine ever so keen, the friend of man should not be eaten."

"That was while the beef lasted; but since we have come to cats, who shall predict immunity to dogs? *Quid intactum ne-faste liquimus?* Nothing is sacred from the hand of rapine."

The church of the Madeleine now stood before them. *Moblots* were playing pitch-and-toss on its steps.

"I don't wish you to accompany me, Messieurs," said Lemercier, apologetically, "but I am going to enter the church."

"To pray?" asked De Brézé, in profound astonishment.

"Not exactly; but I want to speak to my friend Rochebriant, and I know I shall find him there."

"Praying?" again asked De Brézé.

"Yes."

"That is curious—a young Parisian exquisite at prayer—that is worth seeing. Let us enter, too, Savarin."

They enter the church. It is filled, and even the sceptical De Brézé is impressed and awed by the sight. An intense fervor pervades the congregation. The majority, it is true, are women, many of them in deep mourning, and many of their faces mourning deeper than the dress. Everywhere may be seen gushing tears, and everywhere faintly heard the sound of stifled sighs. Besides the women were men of all ages—young, middle-aged, old, with heads bowed and hands clasped, pale, grave, and earnest. Most of them were evidently of the superior grade in life—nobles, and the higher *bourgeoisie*, few of the *ouvrier* class, very few, and these were of an earlier generation. I except soldiers, of whom there were many, from the provincial Mobiles, chiefly Bretons; you knew the Breton soldiers by the little cross worn on their *képis*.

Among them Lemercier at once distinguished the noble countenance of Alain de Rochebriant. De Brézé and Savarin looked

at each other with solemn eyes. I know not when either had last been within a church; perhaps both were startled to find that religion still existed in Paris—and largely exist it does, though little seen on the surface of society, little to be estimated by the articles of journals and the reports of foreigners. Unhappily, those among whom it exists are not the ruling class—are of the classes that are dominated over and obscured in every country the moment the populace becomes master. And at that moment the journals chiefly read were warring more against the Deity than the Prussians—were denouncing soldiers who attended mass. "The Gospel certainly makes a bad soldier," writes the patriot Pyat.

Lemercier knelt down quietly. The other two men crept noiselessly out, and stood waiting for him on the steps, watching the *Moblots* (Parisian *Moblots*) at play.

"I should not wait for the *roturier* if he had not promised me a *rôti*," said the Vicomte de Brézé, with a pitiful attempt at the patrician wit of the *ancien régime*.

Savarin shrugged his shoulders. "I am not included in the invitation," said he, "and therefore free to depart. I must go and look up a former *confrère* who was an enthusiastic Red Republican, and I fear does not get so much to eat since he has no longer an Emperor to abuse."

So Savarin went away. A few minutes afterwards Lemercier emerged from the church with Alain.

CHAPTER XIV.

"I KNEW I should find you in the Madeleine," said Lemercier, "and I wished much to know when you had news from Duplessis. He and your fair *fiancée* are with your aunt still saying at Rochebriant?"

"Certainly. A pigeon arrived this morning with a few lines. All well there."

"And Duplessis thinks, despite the war, that he shall be able, when the time comes, to pay Louvier the mortgage-sum?"

"He never doubts that. His credit in London is so good. But of course all works of improvement are stopped."

"Pray did he mention me?—anything about the messenger who was to pierce the Prussian lines?"

"What! has the man not arrived? It is two weeks since he left."

"The Uhlans have no doubt shot him—the assassins,—and drunk up my 25,000 francs—the thieves."

"I hope not. But in case of delay, Duplessis tells me I am to remit to you 2,000 francs for your present wants. I will send them to you this evening."

"How the deuce do you possess such a sum?"

"I came from Brittany with a purse well filled. Of couse I could have no scruples in accepting money from my destined father-in-law."

"And you can spare this sum?"

"Certainly—the State now provides for me; I am in command of a Breton company."

"True. Come and dine with me and De Brézé.

"Alas! I cannot. I have to see both the Vandemars before I return to the camp for the night. And now — hush — come this way (drawing Frederic further from De Brézé), I have famous news for you. A sortie on a grand scale is imminent; in a few days we may hope for it."

"I have heard that so often that I am incredulous."

"Take it as a fact now."

"What! Trochu has at last matured his plan?"

"He has changed its original design, which was to cut through the Prussian lines to Rouen, occupying there the richest country for supplies, guarding the left bank of the Seine and a watercourse to convoy them to Paris. The incidents of war prevented that: he has a better plan now. The victory of the army of the Loire at Orleans opens a new enterprise. We shall cut our way through the Prussians, join that army, and with united forces fall on the enemy at the rear. Keep this a secret as yet, but rejoice with me that we shall prove to the invaders what men who fight for their native soil can do under the protection of Heaven."

"Fox, Fox, *mon chéri*," said Lemercier, as he walked towards the *Café Riche* with De Brézé; "thou shalt have a *festin de Balthazar* under the protection of Heaven."

CHAPTER XV.

On leaving Lemercier and De Brézé, Savarin regained the Boulevard, and pausing every now and then to exchange a few words with acquaintances—the acquaintances of the genial author were numerous—turned into the *quartier* de la Chaussée d'Antin, and gaining a small neat house, with a richly-ornamented *façade*, mounted very clean, well-kept stairs to a third story. On one of the doors on the landing-place was nailed a card, inscribed, "Gustave Rameau, *homme de lettres*." Certainly it is not usual in Paris thus to *afficher* one's self as a "man of letters." But Genius scorns what is usual. Had not Victor Hugo left in the hotel-books on the Rhine his designation "*homme de lettres*"? Did not the heir to one of the loftiest houses in the peerage of England, and who was also a first-rate amateur in painting, inscribe on his studio when in Italy, * * * *, "*artiste*"? Such examples, no doubt, were familiar to Gustave Rameau, and "*homme de lettres*" was on the scrap of pasteboard nailed to his door.

Savarin rang; the door opened, and Gustave appeared. The poet was, of course, picturesquely attired. In his day of fashion he had worn within doors a very pretty fanciful costume, designed after portraits of the young Raffaele; that costume he had preserved—he wore it now. It looked very threadbare, and the *pourpoint* very soiled. But the beauty of the poet's face had survived the lustre of the garments. True, thanks to absinthe, the cheeks had become somewhat puffy and bloated. Gray was distinctly visible in the long ebon tresses. But still the beauty of the face was of that rare type which a Thorwaldsen or a Gibson seeking a model for a Narcissus would have longed to fix into marble.

Gustave received his former chief with a certain air of reserved dignity; led him into his chamber, only divided by a curtain from his accommodation for washing and slumber, and placed him in an arm-chair beside a drowsy fire—fuel had already become very dear.

"Gustave," said Savarin, "are you in a mood favorable to a little serious talk?"

"Serious talk from M. Savarin is a novelty too great not to command my profoundest interest."

"Thank you,—and to begin: I who know the world and mankind advise you, who do not, never to meet a man who wishes to do you a kindness with an ungracious sarcasm. Irony is a weapon I ought to be skilled in, but weapons are used against enemies, and it is only a tyro who flourishes his rapier in the face of his friends."

"I was not aware that M. Savarin still permitted me to regard him as a friend."

"Because I discharged the duties of friend—remonstrated, advised, and warned. However, let bygones be bygones. I entreated you not to quit the safe shelter of the paternal roof. You insisted on doing so. I entreated you not to send to one of the most ferocious of the Red, or rather, the Communistic journals, articles, very eloquent, no doubt, but which would most seriously injure you in the eyes of quiet, orderly people, and compromise your future literary career for the sake of a temporary flash in the pan during a very evanescent period of revolutionary excitement. You scorned my adjurations, but at all events you had the grace not to append your true-name to those truculent effusions. In literature, if literature revive in France, we two are henceforth separated. But I do not forego the friendly interest I took in you in the days when you were so continually in my house. My wife, who liked you so cordially, implored me to look after you during her absence from Paris, and, *enfin, mon pauvre garçon*, it would grieve me very much if, when she comes back, I had to say to her 'Gustave Rameau has thrown away the chance of redemption and of happiness which you deemed was secure to him.' *A l'œil malade la lumière nuit.*

So saying, he held out his hand kindly.

Gustave, who was far from deficient in affectionate or tender impulses, took the hand respectfully, and pressed it warmly.

"Forgive me if I have been ungracious, M. Savarin, and vouchsafe to hear my explanation."

"Willingly, *mon garçon*."

"When I became convalescent, well enough to leave my father's house, there were circumstances which compelled me to do so. A young man accustomed to the life of a *garçon* can't be always tied to his mother's apron strings."

"Especially if the apron-pocket does not contain a bottle of absinthe," said Savarin,

drily. 'You may well color and try to look angry; but I know that the doctor strictly forbade the use of that deadly *liqueur*, and enjoined your mother to keep strict watch on your liability to its temptations. And hence one cause of your *ennui* under the paternal roof. But if there you could not imbibe absinthe, you were privileged to enjoy a much diviner intoxication. There you could have the foretaste of domestic bliss,—the society of the girl you loved, and who was pledged to become your wife. Speak frankly. Did not that society itself begin to be wearisome?"

"No," cried Gustave, eagerly, "it was not wearisome, but——"

"Yes, but——"

"But it could not be all-sufficing to a soul of fire like mine."

"Hem," murmured Savarin—"a soul of fire! This is very interesting; pray go on."

"The calm, cold, sister-like affection of a childish undeveloped nature, which knew no passion except for art, and was really so little emancipated from the nursery as to take for serious truth all the old myths of religion—such companionship may be very soothing and pleasant when one is lying on one's sofa and must live by rule, but when one regains the vigor of youth and health——"

"Do not pause," said Savarin, gazing with more compassion than envy on that melancholy impersonation of youth and health. "When one regains that vigor of which I myself have no recollection, what happens?"

"The thirst for excitement, the goads of ambition, the irresistible claims which the world urges upon genius, return."

"And that genius, finding itself at the North Pole amid Cimmerian darkness in the atmosphere of a childish intellect—in other words, the society of a pure-minded virgin, who, though a good romance-writer, writes nothing but what a virgin may read, and, though a *bel esprit*, says her prayers and goes to church—then genius—well, pardon my ignorance—what does genius do?"

"Oh, M. Savarin, M. Savarin! don't let us talk any more. There is no sympathy between us. I cannot bear that bloodless, mocking, cynical mode of dealing with grand emotions, which belongs to the generation of the *Doctrinaires*. I am not a Thiers or a Guizot."

"Good heavens! who ever accused you of being either? I did not mean to be cynical. Mademoiselle Cicogna has often said I am, but I did not think you would. Pardon me. I quite agree with the philosopher who asserted that the wisdom of the past was an imposture, that the meanest intellect now living is wiser than the greatest intellect which is buried in Père la Chaise; because the dwarf who follows the giant, when perched on the shoulders of the giant, sees farther than the giant ever could. *Allez.* I go in for your generation. I abandon Guizot and Thiers. Do condescend and explain to my dull understanding, as the inferior mortal of a former age, what are the grand emotions which impel a soul of fire in your wiser generation. The thirst of excitement—what excitement? The goads of ambition—what ambition?"

"A new social system is struggling from the dissolving elements of the old one, as in the fables of priestcraft, the soul frees itself from the body which has become ripe for the grave. Of that new system I aspire to be a champion—a leader. Behold the excitement that allures me, the ambition that goads."

"Thank you," said Savarin, meekly; "I am answered. I recognize the dwarf perched on the back of the giant. Quitting these lofty themes, I venture to address to you now one simple matter-of-fact question—How about Mademoiselle Cicogna? Do you think you can induce her to transplant herself to the new social system, which I presume will abolish among among other obsolete myths, the institution of marriage?"

"M. Savarin, your question offends me. Theoretically I am opposed to the existing superstitions that encumber the very simple principle by which may be united two persons so long as they desire the union, and separated so soon as the union becomes distasteful to either. But I am perfectly aware that such theories would revolt a young lady like Mademoiselle Cicogna. I have never even named them to her, and our engagement holds good."

"Engagement of the marriage? No period for the ceremony fixed?"

"That is not my fault. I urged it on Isaura with all earnestness before I left my father's house."

"That was long after the seige had begun. Listen to me, Gustave. No persuasion of mine

or my wife's, or Mrs. Morley's, could induce Isaura to quit Paris while it was yet time. She said very simply that, having pledged her troth and hand to you, it would be treason to honor and duty if she should allow any considerations for herself to be even discussed so long as you needed her presence. You were then still suffering, and though convalescent, not without danger of a relapse. And your mother said to her—I heard the words—'Tis not for his bodily health I could dare to ask you to stay, when every man who can afford it is sending away his wife, sisters, daughters. As for that, I should suffice to tend him; but if you go, I resign all hope for the health of his mind and his soul.' I think at Paris there may be female poets and artists whom that sort of argument would not have much influenced. But it so happens that Isaura is not a *Parisienne*. She believes in those old myths which you think fatal to sympathies with yourself; and those old myths also lead her to believe that where a woman has promised she will devote her life to a man, she cannot forsake him when told by his mother that she is necessary to the health of his mind and his soul. Stay. Before you interrupt me, let me finish what I have to say. It appears that, so soon as your bodily health was improved, you felt that your mind and your soul could take care of themselves; and certainly it seems to me that Isaura Cicogna is no longer of the smallest use to either."

Rameau was evidently much disconcerted by this speech. He saw what Savarin was driving at—the renunciation of all bond between Isaura and himself. He was not prepared for such renunciation. He still felt for the Italian as much of love as he could feel for any woman who did not kneel at his feet, as at those of Apollo condescending to the homage of Arcadian maids. But, on the one hand, he felt that many circumstances had occurred since the disaster at Sedan to render Isaura a very much less desirable *parti* than she had been when he had first wrung from her the pledge of betrothal. In the palmy times of a Government in which literature and art commanded station and insured fortune, Isaura, whether as authoress or singer, was a brilliant marriage for Gustave Rameau. She had also then an assured and competent, if modest, income. But when times change, people change with them. As the income for the moment (and heaven only can say how long that moment might last), Isaura's income had disappeared. It will be recollected that Louvier had invested her whole fortune in the houses to be built in the street called after his name. No houses, even when built, paid any rent now. Louvier had quitted Paris; and Isaura could only be subsisting upon such small sum as she might have had in hand before the siege commenced. All career in such literature and art as Isaura-adorned was at a dead stop. Now, to do Rameau justice, he was by no means an avaricious or mercenary man. But he yearned for modes of life to which money was essential. He liked his "comforts;" and his comforts included the luxuries of elegance and show—comforts not to be attained by marriage with Isaura under existing circumstances.

Nevertheless it is qiute true that he had urged her to marry him at once, before he had quitted his father's house; and her modest shrinking from such proposal, however excellent the reasons for delay in the national calamities of the time, as well as the poverty which the calamity threatened, had greatly wounded his *amour propre*. He had always felt that her affection for him was not love; and though he could reconcile himself to that conviction when many solid advantages were attached to the prize of her love, and when he was ill, and penitent, and maudlin, and the calm affection of a saint seemed to him infinitely preferable to the vehement passion of a sinner,—yet when Isaura was only Isaura by herself—Isaura *minus* all the *et cetera* which had previously been taken into account—the want of adoration for himself very much lessened her value.

Still, though he acquiesed in the delayed fulfilment of the engagement with Isaura, he had no thought of withdrawing from the engagement itself, and after a slight pause he replied: "You do me great injustice if you suppose that the occupations to which I devote myself render me less sensible to the merits of Mademoiselle Cicogna, or less eager for our union. On the contrary, I will confide to you—as a man of the world—one main reason why I quitted my father's house, and why I desire to keep my present address a secret. Mademoisolle Caumartin conceived for me a passion —a caprice—which was very flattering for a time, but which latterly became very trouble-

some. Figure to yourself—she daily came to our house while I was lying ill, and with the greatest difficulty my mother got her out of it. That was not all. She pestered me with letters containing all sorts of threats—nay, actually kept watch at the house; and one day when I entered the carriage with my mother and Signora Venosta for a drive in the Bois (meaning to call for Isaura by the way), she darted to the carriage-door, caught my hand, and would have made a scene if the coachman had given her leave to do so. Luckily he had the tact to whip on his horses, and we escaped. I had some little difficulty in convincing the Signora Venosta that the girl was crazed. But I felt the danger I incurred of her coming upon me some moment when in company with Isaura, and so I left my father's house; and naturally wishing to steer clear of this vehement little demon till I am safely married, I keep my address a secret from all who are likely to tell her of it."

"You do wisely if you are really afraid of her, and cannot trust your nerves to say to her plainly, 'I am engaged to be married; all is at an end between us. Do not force me to employ the police to protect myself from unwelcome importunities.'"

"Honestly speaking, I doubt if I have the nerve to do that, and I doubt still more if it would be of any avail. It is very *embêtant* to be so passionately loved; but, *que voulez vous?* It is my fate."

"Poor Martyr! I condole with you: and to say truth, it was chiefly to warn you of Mademoiselle Caumartin's pertinacity that I call this evening."

Here Savarin related the particulars of his *rencontre* with Julie, and concluded by saying: "I suppose I may take your word of honor that you will firmly resist all temptation to renew a connection which would be so incompatible with the respect due to your *fiancée?* Fatherless and protectorless as Isaura is, I feel bound to act as a virtual guardian to one in whom my wife takes so deep an interest, and to whom, as she thinks, she had some hand in bringing about your engagement; she is committed to no small responsibilities. Do not allow poor Julie, whom I sincerely pity, to force on me the unpleasant duty of warning your *fiancée* of the dangers to which she might be subjected by marriage with an Adonis whose fate it is to be so profoundly beloved by the sex in general, and ballet nymphs in particular."

"There is no chance of so disagreeable a duty being incumbent on you, M. Savarin. Of course, what I myself have told you in confidence is sacred."

"Certainly. There are things in the life of a *garçon* before marriage which would be an affront to the modesty of his *fiancée* to communicate and discuss. But then those things must belong exclusively to the past, and cast no shadow over the future. I will not interrupt you further. No doubt you have work for the night before you. Do the Red journalists for whom you write pay enough to support you in these terrible dear times?"

"Scarcely. But I look forward to wealth and fame in the future. And you?"

"I just escape starvation. If the siege last much longer, it is not of the gout I shall die. Good-night to you."

CHAPTER XVI.

ISAURA had, as we have seen, been hitherto saved by the siege and its consequences from the fulfilment of her engagement to Gustave Rameau; and since he had quitted his father's house she had not only seen less of him, but a certain chill crept into his converse in the visits he paid to her. The compassionate feeling his illness had excited, confirmed by the unwonted gentleness of his mood, and the short-lived remorse with which he spoke of his past faults and follies, necessarily faded away in proportion as he regained that kind of febrile strength which was his normal state of health, and with it the arrogant self-assertion which was ingrained in his character. But it was now more than ever that she became aware of the antagonism between all that constituted his inner life and her own. It was not that he volunteered in her presence the express utterance of those opinions, social or religious, which he addreseed to the public in the truculent journal to which, under a *nom de plume*, he was the most inflammatory contributor. Whether it was that he shrank from insulting the ears of the pure virgin whom he had wooed as wife with avowals of his disdain of marriage

bonds, or perhaps from shocking yet more her womanly humanity and her religious faith by cries for the blood of anti-republican traitors and the down-fall of Christain altars; or whether he yet clung, though with relapsing affection, to the hold which her promise had imposed on him, and felt that that hold would be for ever gone, and that she would recoil from his side in terror and dismay, if she once learned that the man who had implored her to be his saving angel from the comparatively mild errors of youth, had so belied his assurance, so mocked her credulity, as deliberately to enter into active warfare against all that he knew her sentiments regarded as noble and her conscience received as divine: despite the suppression of avowed doctrine on his part, the total want of sympathy between these antagonistic natures made itself felt by both—more promptly felt by Isaura. If Gustave did not frankly announce to her in that terrible time (when all that a little later broke out on the side of the Communists was more or less forcing ominous way to the lips of those who talked with confidence to each other, whether to approve or condemn) the associates with whom he was leagued, the path to which he had committed his career,—still for her instincts for genuine Art—which for its development needs the serenity of peace, which for its ideal needs dreams that soar into the Infinite—Gustave had only the scornful sneer of the man who identifies with his ambition the violent upset of all that civilization has established in this world, and the blank negation of all that patient hope and heroic aspiration which humanity carries on into the next.

On his side, Gustave Rameau who was not without certain fine and delicate attributes in a complicated nature over which the personal vanity and the mobile temperament of the Parisian reigned supreme, chafed at the restraints imposed on him. No matter what a man's doctrines may be—however abominable you and I may deem them—man desires to find in the dearest fellowship he can establish, that sympathy in the woman his choice singles out from her sex—deference to his opinions, sympathy with his objects, as man. So, too, Gustave's sense of honor—and according to his own Parisian code that sense was keen—became exquisitely stung by the thought that he was compelled to play the part of a mean dissimulator to the girl for whose opinions he had the profoundest contempt. How could these two, betrothed to each other, not feel, though without coming to open dissension, that between them had flowed the inlet of water by which they had been riven asunder? What man, if he can imagine himself a Gustave Rameau, can blame the revolutionist absorbed in ambitious projects for turning the pyramid of society topsy-turvy, if he shrank more and more from the companionship of a betrothed with whom he could not venture to exchange three words without caution and reserve? And what woman can blame an Isaura if she felt a sensation of relief at the very neglect of the affianced whom she had compassioned and could never love?

Possibly the reader may best judge of the state of Isaura's mind at this time by a few brief extracts from an imperfect fragmentary journal, in which, amid saddened and lonely hours, she held converse with herself.

"One day at Enghien I listened silently to a conversation between M. Savarin and the Englishman, who sought to explain the conception of duty in which the German poet has given such noble utterance to the thoughts of the German philosopher—viz., that moral aspiration has the same goal as the artistic,—the attainment to the calm delight wherein the pain of effort disappears in the content of achievement. Thus in life, as in art, it is through discipline that we arrive at freedom, and duty only completes itself when all motives, all actions, are attuned into one harmonious whole, and it is not striven for as duty, but enjoyed as happiness. M. Savarin treated this theory with the mockery with which the French wit is ever apt to treat what it terms German mysticism. According to him, duty must always be a hard and difficult struggle; and he said laughingly, 'Whenever a man says, "I have done my duty," it is with a long face and a mournful sigh.'

"Ah, how devoutly I listened to the Englishman! how harshly the Frenchman's irony jarred upon my ears! And yet now, in the duty that life imposes on me, to fulfil which I strain every power vouchsafed to my nature, and seek to crush down every impulse that rebels, where is the promised calm, where any approach to the content of achievement? Contemplating the way before me, the Beautiful even of Art has vanished. I see but cloud and desert. Can this which I assume to be duty really be so? Ah, is it not sin even to ask my heart that question?

* * * * *

"Madame Rameau is very angry with her son for his neglect both of his parents and of me. I have had to take his part against her. I would not have him lose their love. Poor Gustave! But when Madame Rameau suddenly said to-day: 'I erred in seeking the union between thee and Gustave. Retract thy promise; in doing so thou wilt be justified,'—oh, the strange joy that flashed upon me as she spoke. Am I justified?

Am I? Oh, if that Englishman had never crossed my path! Oh, if I had never loved! or if in the last time we met he had not asked for my love, and confessed his own! Then, I think, I could honestly reconcile my conscience with my longings, and say to Gustave, 'We do not suit each other; be we both released!' But now —is it that Gustave is really changed from what he was, when in despondence at my own lot, and in pitying belief that I might brighten and exalt his, I plighted my troth to him? or is it not rather that the choice I thus voluntarily made became so intolerable a thought the moment I knew I was beloved and sought by another; and from that moment I lost the strength I had before, —strength to silence the voice at my own heart? What! is it the image of that other one which is persuading me to be false?—to exaggerate the failings, to be blind to the merits of him who has a right to say, 'I am what I was when thou didst pledge thyself to take me for better or for worse?'

* * * * *

"Gustave has been here after an absence of several days. He was not alone. The good Abbé Vertpré and Madame de Vandemar, with her son, Raoul, were present. They had come on matters connected with our ambulauce. They do not know of my engagement to Gustave; and seeing him in the uniform of a National Guard, the Abbé courteously addressed to him some questions as to the possibility of checking the terrible increase of the vice of intoxication, so alien till of late to the habits of the Parisians, and becoming fatal to discipline and bodily endurance,—could the number of the *cantines* on the ramparts be more limited? Gustave answered with rudeness and bitter sarcasm, 'Before priests could be critics in military matters they must undertake military service themselves.'

"The Abbé replied with unalterable good humor, 'But in order to criticise the effects of drunkenness, must one get drunk one's self?' Gustave was put out, and retired into a corner of the room, keeping sullen silence till my other visitors left.

"Then before I could myself express the pain his words and manner had given me, he said abruptly, 'I wonder how you can tolerate the *tartuferie* which may amuse on the comic stage, but in the tragedy of these times is revolting.' This speech roused my anger, and the conversation that ensued was the gravest that had ever passed between us.

"If Gustave were of stronger nature and more concentrated will, I believe that the only feelings I should have for him would be antipathy and dread. But it is his very weaknesses and inconsistencies that secure to him a certain tenderness of interest. I think he could never be judged without great indulgence by women; there is in him so much of the child—wayward, irritating at one moment, and the next penitent, affectionate. One feels as if persistence in evil were impossible to one so delicate both in mind and form. That peculiar order of genius to which he belongs seems as if it ought to be so estranged from all directions, violent or coarse. When in poetry he seeks to utter some audacious and defying sentiment, the substance melts away in daintiness of expression, in soft, lute-like strains of slender music. And when he has stung, angered, revolted my heart the most, suddenly he subsides into such pathetic gentleness, such tearfui remorse, that I feel as if resentment to one so helpless, desertion of one who must fall without the support of a friendly hand, were a selfish cruelty. It seems to me as if I were dragged towards a precipice by a sickly child clinging to my robe.

"But in this last conversation with him, his language in regard to subjects I hold most sacred drew forth from me words which startled him, and which *may* avail to save him from that worst insanity of human minds, —the mimicry of the Titans who would have dethroned a God to restore a Chaos. I told him frankly that I had only promised to share his fate, on my faith in his assurance of my power to guide it heavenward; and that if the opinions he announced were seriously entertained, and put forth in defiance of heaven itself, we were separated for ever. I told him how earnestly, in the calamities of the time, my own soul had sought to take refuge in thoughts and hopes beyond the earth; and how deeply many a sentiment that in former days passed by me with a smile in the light talk of the *salons*, now shocked me as an outrage on the reverence which the mortal child owes to the Divine Father. I owned to him how much of comfort, of sustainment, of thought and aspiration, elevated beyond the sphere of Art in which I had hitherto sought the purest air, the loftiest goal, I owed to intercourse with minds like those of the Abbé de Vertpré; and how painfully I felt as if I were guilty of ingratitude when he compelled me to listen to insults on those whom I recognized as *benefactors*.

"I wished to speak sternly; but it is my great misfortune, my prevalent weakness, that I cannot be stern when I ought to be. It is with me in life as in art. I never could on the stage have taken the part of a Norma or a Medea. If I attempt in fiction a character which deserves condemnation, I am untrue to poetic justice. I cannot condemn and execute; I can but compassionate and pardon the creature I myself have created. I was never in the real world stern but to one; and then, alas! it was because I loved where I could no longer love with honor; and I, knowing my weakness, had terror lest I should yield.

"So Gustave did not comprehend from my voice, my manner, how gravely I was in earnest. But, himself softened, affected to tears. he confessed his own faults —ceased to argue in order to praise; and—and—uttering protestations seemingly the most sincere, he left me bound to him still—bound to him still—woe is me!"

It is true that Isaura had come more directly under the influence of religion than she had been in the earlier dates of this narrative. There is a time in the lives of most of us, and especially in the lives of women, when, despondent of all joy in an earthly future, and tortured by conflicts between inclination and duty, we transfer all the passion and fervor of our troubled souls to enthusiastic yearnings for the Divine Love; seeking to rebaptize ourselves in the fountain of its mercy, taking thence the only hopes that can cheer, the only strength that can sustain us. Such a time had come to Isaura. Formerly she had escaped from the griefs of the work-day world into the garden-land of Art. Now, Art had grown unwelcome to her, almost hateful. Gone was the spell from the garden-land; its flowers were faded, its paths were stony, its sunshine had

vanished in mist and rain. There are to voices of Nature in the soul of the genuine artist,—that is, of him who, because he can create, comprehends the necessity of the great Creator. Those voices are never both silent. When one is hushed the other becomes distinctly audible. The one speaks to him of Art, the other of Religion.

At that period several societies for the relief and tendance of the wounded had been formed by the women of Paris,—the earliest, if I mistake not, by ladies of the highest rank—amongst whom were the Comtesse de Vandemar and the Contessa di Rimini—though it necessarily included others of stations less elevated. To this society at the request of Alain de Rochebriant and of Enguerrand, Isaura had eagerly attached herself. It occupied much of her time; and in connection with it she was brought much into sympathetic acquaintance with Raoul de Vandemar—the most zealous and active member of that Society of St. François de Sales, to which belonged other young nobles of the Legitimist creed. The passion of Raoul's life was the relief of human suffering. In him was personified the ideal of Christian charity. I think all, or most of us, have known what it is to pass under the influence of a nature that is so far akin to ours that it desires to become something better and higher than it is—that desire being paramount in ourselves—but seeks to be that something in ways not akin to, but remote from, the ways in which we seek it. When this contact happens, either one nature, by the mere force of will, subjugates and absorbs the other, or both, while preserving their own individuality, apart and independent, enrich themselves by mutual interchange, and the asperities which the differences of taste and sentiment in detail might otherwise provoke melt in the sympathy which unites spirits striving with equal earnestness to rise nearer to the unseen and unattainable Source, which they equally recognize as Divine.

Perhaps, had these two persons met a year ago in the ordinary intercourse of the world, neither would have detected the sympathy of which I speak. Raoul was not without the prejudice against artists and writers of romance, that are shared by many who cherish the persuasion that all is vanity which does not concentrate imagination and intellect in the destinies of the soul hereafter; and Isaura might have excited his compassion, certainly not his reverence. While to her, his views on all that seeks to render the actual life attractive and embellished, through the accomplishments of Muse and Grace, would have seemed the narrow-minded asceticism of a bigot. But now, amid the direful calamities of the time, the beauty of both natures became visible to each. To the eyes of Isaura tenderness became predominant in the monastic self-denial of Raoul. To the eyes of Raoul, devotion became predominant in the gentle thoughtfulness of Isaura. Their intercourse was in ambulance and hospital—in care for the wounded, in prayer for the dying. Ah! it is easy to declaim against the frivolities and vices of Parisian society as it appears on the surface; and, in revolutionary times, it is the very worst of Paris that ascends in scum to the top. But descend below the surface, even in that demoralizing suspense of order, and nowhere on earth might the angel have beheld the image of humanity more amply vindicating its claim to the heritage of heaven.

CHAPTER XVII.

The warning announcement of some great effort on the part of the besieged, which Alain had given to Lemercier, was soon to be fulfilled.

For some days the principal thoroughfares were ominously lined with military *convois*. The loungers on the Boulevards stopped to gaze on the long defiles of troops and cannon, commissariat conveyances, and, saddening accompaniments! the vehicles of various ambulances for the removal of the wounded. With what glee the loungers said to each other, "*Enfin!*" Among all the troops that Paris sent forth, none were so popular as those which Paris had not nurtured—the sailors. From the moment they arrived, the sailors had been the pets of the capital. They soon proved themselves the most notable contrast to that force which Paris herself had produced—the National Guard. Their frames were hardy, their habits active, their discipline perfect, their manners mild and polite. "Oh if

all our troops were like these!" was the common exclamation of the Parisians.

At last burst forth upon Paris the proclamations of General Trochu and General Ducrot; the first brief, calm, and Breton-like, ending with "Putting our trust in God. March on for our country:" the second more detailed, more candidly stating obstacles and difficulties, but fiery with eloquent enthusiasm, not unsupported by military statistics, in the 400 canon, two-thirds of which were of the largest calibre, that no material object could resist; more than 150,000 soldiers, all well armed, well equipped, abundantly provided with munitions, and all (*j'en ai l'espour*) animated by an irresistible ardor. "For me," concludes the General, "I am resolved. I swear before you, before the whole nation, that I will not re-enter Paris except as dead or victorious."

At these proclamations, who then at Paris does not recall the burst of enthusiasm that stirred the surface? Trochu became once more popular; even the Communistic or atheistic journals refrained from complaining that he attended mass, and invited his countrymen to trust in a God. Ducrot was more than popular—he was adored.

The several companies in which De Maulléon and Enguerrand served departed towards their post early on the same morning, that of the 28th. All the previous night, while Enguerrand was buried in profound slumber, Raoul remained in his brother's room; sometimes on his knees before the ivory crucifix, which had been their mother's last birthday gift to her youngest son—sometimes seated beside the bed in profound and devout meditation. At daybreak, Madame de Vandemar stole into the chamber. Unconscious of his brother's watch, he had asked her to wake him in good time, for the young man was a sound sleeper. Shading the candle she bore with one hand, with the other she drew aside the curtain, and looked at Enguerrand's calm fair face, its lips parted in the happy smile which seemed to carry joy with it wherever its sunshine played. Her tears fell noiselessly on her darling's cheek; she then knelt down and prayed for strength. As she rose she felt Raoul's arm around her; they looked at each other in silence; then she bowed her head and wakened Enguerrand with her lips. "*Pas de querelle, mes amis*," he murmured, opening his sweet blue eyes drowsily. "Ah, it was a dream! I thought Jules and Emile (two friends of his) were worrying each other; and you know, dear Raoul, that I am the most officious of peacemakers. Time to rise is it? No peacemaking to-day. Kiss me again, mother, and say 'Bless thee.'"

"Bless thee, bless thee, my child," cried the mother, wrapping her arms passionately round him, and in tones choked with sobs.

"Now leave me, *maman*," said Enguerrand resorting to the infantine ordinary name, which he had not used for years. "Raoul, stay and help me to dress. I must be *très beau* to-day. I shall join thee at breakfast, *maman*. Early for such repast, but, *l'appêtit vient en mangeant*. Mind the coffee is hot."

Enguerrand, always careful of each detail of dress, was especially so that morning, and especially gay humming the old air, "Partant pour la Syrie." But his gaiety was checked when Raoul, taking from his breast a holy talisman, which he habitually wore there, suspended it with loving hands round his brother's neck. It was a small crystal set in Byzantine filagree; imbedded in it was a small splinter of wood, said, by pious tradition, to be a relic of the Divine cross. It had been for centuries in the family of the Contessa di Rimini, and was given by her to Raoul, the only gift she had ever made him, as an emblem of the sinless purity of the affection that united those two souls in the bonds of the beautiful belief.

"She bade me transfer it to thee to-day, my brother," said Raoul, simply; "and now without a pang I can gird on thee thy soldier's sword."

Enguerrand clasped his brother in his arms, and kissed him with passionate fervor. "Oh, Raoul! how I love thee! how good thou hast ever been to me! how many sins thou hast saved me from! how indulgent thou hast been to those from which thou couldst not save! Think on that, my brother, in case we do not meet again on earth."

"Hush, hush, Enguerrand! No gloomy forebodings now! Come, come hither, my half of life, my sunny half of life!" and uttering these words, he led Enguerrand towards the crucifix, and there, in deeper and more solemn voice, said, "Let us pray." So the brothers knelt side by side, and Raoul prayed aloud as only such souls can pray.

When they descended into the *salon* where breakfast was set out, they found assembled several of their relations, and some of Enguerrand's young friends not engaged in the sortie. One or two of the latter, indeed, were disabled from fighting by wounds in former fields; they left their sick-beds to bid him good-bye. Unspeakable was the affection this genial nature inspired in all who came into the circle of its winning magic; and when, tearing himself from them, he descended the stair, and passed with light step through the *porte cochère*, there was a crowd around the house—so widely had his popularity spread among even the lower classes, from which the Mobiles in his regiment were chiefly composed. He departed to the place of rendezvous amid a chorus of exhilarating cheers.

Not thus lovingly tended on, not thus cordially greeted, was that equal idol of a former generation, Victor de Mauléon, No pious friend prayed beside his couch, no loving kiss waked hm from his slumbers. At the grey of the November dawn he rose from a sleep which had no smiling dreams, with that mysterious instinct of punctual will which cannot even go to sleep without fixing beforehand the exact moment in which sleep shall end. He, too, like Enguerrand, dressed himself with care—unlike Enguerrand, with care strictly soldier-like. Then, seeing he had some little time yet before him, he rapidly revisited pigeon-holes and drawers, in which might be found by prying eyes anything he would deny to their curiosity.

All that he found of this sort were some letters in female handwriting, tied together with faded ribbon, relics of earlier days, and treasured throughout later vicissitudes; letters from the English girl to whom he had briefly referred in his confession to Louvier,—the only girl he had ever wooed as his wife. She was the only daughter of high-born Roman Catholics, residing at the time of his youth in Paris. Reluctantly they had assented to his proposals; joyfully they had retracted their assent when his affairs had become so involved; yet possibly the motive that led him to his most ruinous excesses—the gambling of the turf had been caused by the wild hope of a nature, then fatally sanguine, to retrieve the fortune that might suffice to satisfy the parents. But during his permitted courtship the lovers had corresponded. Her letters were full of warm, if innocent, tenderness—till came the last cold farewell. The family had long ago returned to England; he concluded, of course, that she had married another.

Near to these letters lay the papers which had served to vindicate his honor in that old affair, in which the unsought love of another had brought on him shame and affliction. As his eye fell on the last, he muttered to himself, "I kept *these*, to clear my repute. Can I keep *those*, when, if found, they might compromise the repute of her who might have been my wife had I been worthy of her? She is doubtless now another's; or, if dead,—honor never dies." He pressed his lips to the letters with a passionate, lingering, mournful kiss: then, raking up the ashes of yesterday's fire, and rekindling them, he placed thereon those leaves of a melancholy romance in his past, and watched them slowly, reluctantly smoulder away into tinder. Then he opened a drawer in which lay the only paper of a political character which he had preserved. All that related to plots or conspiracies in which his agency had committed others, it was his habit to destroy as soon as received. For the sole document thus treasured he alone was responsible; it was an outline of his ideal for the future constitution of France, accompanied with elaborate arguments, the heads of which his conversation with the incognito made known to the reader. Of the soundness of this political programme, whatever its merits or faults (a question on which I presume no judgment), he had an intense conviction. He glanced rapidly over its contents, did not alter a word, sealed it up in an envelope, inscribed, "My Legacy to my Countrymen." The papers refuting a calumny relating solely to himself he carried into the battle-field, placed next to his heart,—significant of a Frenchman's love of honor in this world—as the relic placed around the neck of Enguerrand by his pious brother was emblematic of the Christian hope of mercy in the next.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The streets swarmed with the populace gazing on the troops as they passed to their

destination. Among those of the Mobiles who especially caught the eye were two companies in which Enguerrand de Vandemar and Victor de Mauléon commanded. In the first were many young men of good family, or in the higher ranks of the *bourgeoisie*, known to numerous lookers-on; the was something inspiriting in their gay aspects, and in the easy carelessness of their march. Mixed with this company, however, and forming of course the bulk of it, were those who belonged to the lower classes of the population; and though they too might seem gay to an ordinary observer, the gaiety was forced. Many of them were evidently not quite sober; and there was a disorderly want of soldiership in their mien and armament which inspired distrust among such *vieilles moustaches* as, too old for other service than that of the ramparts, mixed here and there among the crowd.

But when De Mauléon's company passed, the *vieilles moustaches* impulsively touched each other. They recognized the march of well-drilled men; the countenances grave and severe, the eyes not looking on this side and that for admiration, the step regularly timed; and conspicious among these men the tall stature and calm front of the leader.

"These fellows will fight well," growled a *vieille moustache:* "where did they fish out their leader?"

"Don't you know?" said a *bourgeois.* "Victor de Mauléon. He won the cross in Algeria for bravery. I recollect him when I was very young; the very devil for women and fighting."

"I wish there were more such devils for fighting and fewer for women," growled again *la vieille moustache.*

One incessant roar of cannon all the night of the 29th. The populace had learned the names of the French cannons, and fancied they could distinguish the several sounds of their thunder. "There spits 'Josephine'!" shouts an invalid sailor. "There howls our own 'Populace'!"* cries a Red Republican from Belleville "There sings 'Le Châtiment'!" laughed Gustave Rameau, who was now become an enthusiastic admirer of the Victor Hugo he had before affected to despise. And all the while, mingled with the roar of the cannon, came, far and near, from the streets, from the ramparts, the gusts of song—song sometimes heroic, sometimes obscene, more often carelessly joyous. The news of General Vinoy's success during the early part of the day had been damped by the evening report of Ducrot's delay in crossing the swollen Marne. But the spirits of the Parisians rallied from a momentary depression on the excitement at night of that concert of martial music.

During that night, close under the guns of the double redoubt of Gravelle and La Faisanderie, eight pontoon-bridges were thrown over the Marne; and at daybreak the first column of the third army under Blanchard and Renoult crossed with all their artillery, and, covered by the fire of the double redoubts, of the forts of Vincennes, Nogent, Rossney, and the batteries of Mont Avron, had an hour before noon carried the village of Champigny, and the first *échelon* of the important plateau of Villiers, and were already commencing the work of intrenchment, when, rallying from the amaze of a defeat, the German forces burst upon them, sustained by fresh batteries. The Prussian pieces of artillery established at Chennevières and at Neuilly opened fire with deadly execution; while a numerous infantry, descending from the intrenchments of Villiers, charged upon the troops under Renoult. Among the French in that strife were Enguerrand and the Mobiles of which he was in command. Dismayed by the unexpected fire, these Mobiles gave way, as indeed did many of the line. Enguerrand rushed forward to the front —"On, *mes enfans*, on! What will our mothers and wives say of us if we fly? *Vive la France!* —On!"

Among those of the better class in that company there rose a shout of applause, but it found no sympathy among the rest. They wavered, they turned. "Will you suffer me to go on alone, cried Enguerrand; and alone he rushed on toward the Prussian line,—rushed, and fell, mortally wounded by a musket-ball. "Revenge, revenge!" shouted some of the foremost; "Revenge!" shouted those in the rear; and, so shouting, turned on their heels and fled. But ere they could disperse they encountered the march, steadfast though rapid, of the troop led by Victor de Mauléon. "Poltroons!" he thundered, with the sonorous

* The "Populace" had been contributed to the artillery, *sou a sou*, by the working class.

depth of his strong voice, "halt and turn, or my men shall fire on you as deserters." "*Vas, citoyen,*" said one fugitive, an officer—popularly elected, because he was the loudest brawler in the club of the Salle Favre, we have seen him before—Charles, the brother of Armand Monnier;—"men can't fight when they desgise their generals. It is our generals who are poltroons and fools both."

"Carry my answer to the ghosts of cowards," cried De Mauléon, and shot the man dead.

His followers, startled and cowed by the deed, and the voice and the look of the death-giver, halted. The officers, who had at first yielded to the panic of their men, took fresh courage, and finally led the bulk of the troop back to their post "*enlevés à la baïonnette,*" to use the phrase of a candid historian of that day.

Day, on the whole, not inglorious to France. It was the first, if it was the last, really important success of the besieged. They remained masters of the ground, the Prussians leaving to them the wounded and the dead.

That night what crowds thronged from Paris to the top of the Montmartre heights, from the observatory on which the celebrated inventor Baxin had lighted up, with some magical electric machine, all the plain of Gennevilliers from Mont Valérien to the Fort de la Briche! The splendor of the blaze wrapped the great city; —distinctly above the roofs of the houses soared the Dôme des Invalides, the spires of Nôtre Dame, the giant turrets of the Tuileries; —and died away on resting on the *infames scapulos Acroceraunia*, the "thunder crags" of the heights occupied by the invading army.

Lemercier, De Brézé, and the elder Rameau —who, despite his peaceful habits and grey hairs, insisted on joining in the aid of *la patrie* —were among the National Guards attached to the Fort de la Briche and the neighboring eminence, and they met in conversation.

"What a victory we have had!" said the old Rameau.

"Rather mortifying to your son, M. Rameau," said Lemercier.

"Mortifying to my son, sir!—the victory of his countrymen. What do you mean?"

"I had the honor to hear M. Gustave the other night at the club *de la Vengeance*,"

"*Bon Dieu!* do you frequent those tragic reunions?" asked De Brézé.

"They are not at all tragic: they are the only comedies left us, as one must amuse one's self somewhere, and the club *de la Vengeance* is the prettiest thing of the sort going. I quite understand why it should fascinate a poet like your son, M. Rameau. It is held in a *salle de café chantant*—style *Louise Quinze*—decorated with a pastoral scene from Watteau. I and my dog Fox drop in. We hear your son haranguing. In what poetical sentences he despaired of the Republic! The Government (he called them *les charlatans de l'Hôtel de Ville*) were imbeciles. They pretended to inaugurate a revolution, and did not employ the most obvious of revolutionary means. There Fox and I pricked up our ears: what where those means? Your son proceeded to explain: 'All mankind were to be appealed to against individual interests. The commerce of luxury was to be abolished: clearly luxury was not at the command of all mankind. *Cafés* and theatres were to be closed for ever—all mankind could not go to *cafés* and theatres. It was idle to expect the masses to combine for anything in which the masses had not an interest in common. The masses had no interest in any property that did not belong to the masses. Programmes of the society to be founded, called the *Ligue Cosmopolite Démocratique*, should be sent at once into all the States of the civilized world—how? by balloons. Money corrupts the world as now composed: but the money at the command of the masses could buy all the monarchs and courtiers and priests of the universe.' At that sentiment, vehemently delivered, the applauses were frantic, and Fox in his excitement began to bark. At the sound of his bark one man cried out, 'That's a Prussian!' another, 'Down with the spy!' another, 'There's an *aristo* present —he keeps alive a dog which would be a week's meal for a family!' I snatch up Fox at the last cry, and clasp him to a bosom protected by the uniform of the National Guard.

"When the hubbub had subsided, your son, M. Rameau, proceeded, quitting mankind in general, and arriving at the question in particular most interesting to his audience—the mobilization of the National Guard; that is, the call upon men who like talking and hate fighting to talk less and fight more. 'It was the sheerest tyranny to select a certain number of free citizens to be butchered. If the

fight was for the mass, there ought to be *la levée en masse.* If one did not compel everybody to fight, why should anybody fight?' Here the applause again became vehement, and Fox again became indiscreet. I subdued Fox's bark into a squeak by pulling his ears. 'What!' cries your poet-son, '*la levée en masse* gives us fifteen millions of soldiers, with which we could crush, not Prussia alone, but the whole of Europe. (Immense sensation.) Let us, then, resolve that the charlatans of the Hôtel de Ville are incapable of delivering us from the Prussians; that they are deposed; that the *Ligue of the Démocratie Cosmopolite* is installed; that meanwhile the Commune shall be voted the Provisional Government, and shall order the Prussians to retire within three days from the soil of Paris.'

"Pardon me this long description, my dear M. Rameau; but I trust I have satisfactorily explained why victory obtained in the teeth of his eloquent opinions, if gratifying to him as a Frenchman, must be mortifying to him as a politician."

The old Rameau sighed, hung his head, and crept away.

While, amid this holiday illumination, the Parisians enjoyed the panorama before them, the *Frères Chrétiens* and the attendants of the various ambulances were moving along the battle plains; the first in their large-brimmed hats and sable garbs, the last in strange motley costume, many of them in glittering uniform—all alike in their serene indifference to danger; often pausing to pick up among the dead their own brethren who had been slaughtered in the midst of their task. Now and then they came on sinister forms apparently engaged in the same duty of tending the wounded and dead, but in truth murderous plunderers, to whom the dead and the dying were equal harvests. Did the wounded man attempt to resist the foul hands searching for their spoil, they added another wound more immediately mortal, grinning as they completed on the dead the robbery they had commenced on the dying.

Raoul de Vandemar had been all the earlier part of the day with the assistants of the ambulance over which he presided, attached to the battalions of the National Guard in a quarter remote from that in which his brother had fought and fallen. When those troops, later in the day, were driven from the Montmedy plateau, which they had at first carried, Raoul repassed towards the plateau at Villiers, on which the dead lay thickest. On the way he heard a vague report of the panic which had dispersed the Mobiles of whom Enguerrand was in command, and of Enguerrand's vain attemp to inspirit them. But his fate was not known. There, at midnight, Raoul is still searching among the ghastly heaps and pools of blood, lighted from afar by the blaze from the observatory of Montmartre, and more near at hand by the bivouac fires extended along the banks to the left of the Marne, while everywhere about the field flitted the lanterns of the *Frères Chrétiens.* Suddenly, in the dimness of a spot cast into shadow by an incompleted earthwork, he observed a small sinister figure perched on the breast of some wounded soldier, evidently not to succor.

He sprang forward and seized a hideous-looking urchin, scarcely twelve years old, who held in one hand a small crystal locket, set in filigree gold, torn from the soldier's breast, and lifted high in the other a long case-knife. At a glance Raoul recognized the holy relic he had given to Enguerrand, and, flinging the precocious murderer to be seized by his assistants, he cast himself beside his brother. Enguerrand still breathed, and his languid eyes brightened as he knew the dear familiar face. He tried to speak, but his voice failed, and he shook his head sadly, but still with a faint smile on his lips. They lifted him tenderly, and placed him on a litter. The movement, gentle as it was, brought back pain, and with the pain strength to mutter, "My mother—I would see her once more."

As at daybreak the loungers on Montmartre and the ramparts descended into the streets—most windows in which were open, as they had been all night, with anxious female faces peering palely down—they saw the conveyances of the ambulances coming dismally along, and many an eye turned wistfully towards the litter on which lay the idol of the pleasure-loving Paris, with the dark, bare-headed figure walking beside it,—onwards, onwards, till it reached the Hôtel de Vandemar, and a woman's cry was heard at the entrance—the mother's cry, "My son! my son!"

BOOK TWELFTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE last book closed with the success of the Parisian sortie on the 30th of November, to be followed by the terrible engagements, no less honorable to French valor, on the 2nd of December. There was the sanguine belief that deliverance was at hand; that Trochu would break through the circle of iron, and effect that junction with the army of Aurelles de Paladine which would compel the Germans to raise the investment;—belief rudely shaken by Ducrot's proclamation of the 4th, to explain the recrossing of the Marne, and the abandonment of the positions conquered, but not altogether dispelled till Von Moltke's letter to Trochu on the 5th anuouncing the defeat of the army of the Loire and the recapture of Orleans. Even then the Parisians did not lose hope of succor; and even after the desperate and fruitless sortie against Le Bourget on the 21st, it was not without witticism on defeat and predictions of triumph, that Winter and Famine settled sullenly on the city.

Our narrative reopens with the last period of the siege.

It was during these dreadful days, that if the vilest and the most hideous aspects of the Parisian population showed themselves at the worst, so all its loveliest, its noblest, its holiest characteristics—unnoticed by ordinary observers in the prosperous days of the capital—became conspicuously prominent. The higher classes, including the remnant of the old *noblesse*, had during the whole seige exhibited qualities in notable contrast to those assigned them by the enemies of aristocracy. Their sons had been foremost among those soldiers who never calumniated a leader, never fled before a foe; their women had been among the most zealous and the most tender nurses of the ambulances they had founded and served; their houses had been freely opened, whether to the families exiled from the suberbs, or in supplement to the hospitals. The amount of relief they afforded unostentatiously, out of means that shared the general failure of accustomed resource, when the famine commenced, would be scarcely credible if stated. Admirable, too, were the fortitude and resignation of the genuine Parisian *bourgeoisie*—the thrifty tradesfolk and small *rentiers*—that class in which, to judge of its timidity when opposed to a mob, courage is not the most conspicuous virtue. Courage became so now—courage to bear hourly increasing privation, and to suppress every murmur of suffering that would discredit their patriotism, and invoke "peace at any price."

It was on this class that the calamities of the siege now pressed the most heavily. The stagnation of trade, and the stoppage of the rents, in which they had invested their savings, reduced many of them to actual want. Those only of their number who obtained the pay of one and a half franc a day as National Guards, could be sure to escape from starvation. But this pay had already begun to demoralize the receivers. Scanty for supply of food, it was ample for supply of drink. And drunkenness, hitherto rare in that rank of the Parisians, became a prevalent vice, aggravated in the case of a National Guard, when it wholly unfitted him for the duties he undertook, especially such National Guards as were raised from the most turbulent democracy of the working class.

But of all that population, there were two sections in which the most beautiful elements of our human nature were most touchingly

manifest—the women and the priesthood, including in the latter denomination all the various brotherhoods and societies which religion formed and inspired.

It was on the 27th of December that Frederic Lemercier stood gazing wistfully on a military report affixed to a blank wall, which stated that "the enemy, worn out by a resistance of over one hundred days," had commenced the bombardment. Poor Frederic was sadly altered; he had escaped the Prussians' guns, but not the Parisian winter—the severest known for twenty years. He was one of the many frozen at their posts—brought back to the ambulance with Fox in his bosom trying to keep him warm. He had only lately been sent forth as convalescent,—ambulances were too crowded to retain a patient longer than absolutely needful,—and had been hunger-pinched and frost-pinched ever since. The luxurious Frederic had still, somewhere or other, a capital yielding above three thousand a-year, and of which he could not now realize a franc, the title-deeds to various investments being in the hands of Duplessis,—the most trustworthy of friends, the most upright of men,—but who was in Bretagne, and could not be got at. And the time had come at Paris when you could not get trust for a pound of horse-flesh, or a daily supply of fuel.

And Frederic Lemercier, who had long since spent the 2000 francs borrowed from Alain (not ignobly, but somewhat ostentatiously, in feasting any acquaintance who wanted a feast), and who had sold to any one who could afford to speculate on such dainty luxuries,—clocks, bronzes, amber-mouthed pipes,—all that had made the envied garniture of his bachelor's apartment—Frederic Lemercier was, so far as the task of keeping body and soul together, worse off than any English pauper who can apply to the Union. Of course he might have claimed his half-pay of thirty sous as a National Guard. But he little knows the true Parisian who imagines a seigneur of the Chaussée d'Antin, the oracle of those with whom he lived, and one who knew life so well that he had preached prudence to a seigneur of the Faubourg like Alain de Rochebriant, stooping to apply for the wages of thirty sous. Rations were only obtained by the wonderful patience of women, who had children to whom they were both saints and martyrs. The hours, the weary hours, one had to wait before one could get one's place on the line for the distribution of that atrocious black bread defeated men,—defeated most wives if only for husbands,—were defied only by mothers and daughters. Literally speaking, Lemercier was starving.

Alain had been badly wounded in the sortie of the 21st, and was laid up in an ambulance. Even if he could have been got at, he had probably nothing left to bestow upon Lemercier.

Lemercier gazed on the announcement of the bombardment,—and the Parisian gaiety, which some French historian of the siege calls *douce philosophie*, lingering on him still, he said audibly, turning round to any stranger who heard: "Happiest of mortals that we are! Under the present Government we are never warned of anything disagreeable that can happen; we are only told of it when it has happened, and then as rather pleasant than otherwise. I get up. I meet a civil *gendarme*. 'What is that firing? which of our provincial armies is taking Prussia in the rear?' 'Monsieur,' says the *gendarme*, 'it is the Prussian Krupp guns.' I look at the proclamation, and my fears vanish,—my heart is relieved. I read that the bombardment is a sure sign that the enemy is worn out."

Some of the men grouped round Frederic ducked their heads in terror; others, who knew that the thunderbolt launched from the plateau of Avron would not fall on the pavements of Paris, laughed and joked. But in front, with no sign of terror, no sound of laughter, stretched, moving inch by inch, the female procession towards the bakery in which the morsel of bread for their infants was doled out.

"Hist, *mon ami*," said a deep voice beside Lemercier. "Look at those women, and do not wound their ears by a jest."

Lemercier, offended by that rebuke, though too susceptible to good emotions not to recognize its justice, tried with feeble fingers to turn up his moustache and to turn a defiant crest upon the rebuker. He was rather startled to see the tall martial form at his side, and to recognize Victor de Mauléon. "Don't you think, M. Lemercier," resumed the Vicomte, half sadly, "that these women are worthy of better husbands and sons than are commonly

found among the soldiers whose uniform we wear?"

"The National Guard! You ought not to sneer at them, Vicomte,—you whose troop covered itself with glory on the great days of Villiers and Champigny,—you in whose praise even the grumblers of Paris became eloquent, and in whom a future Marshal of France is foretold."

"But, alas! more than half of my poor troop was left on the battle-field, or is now wrestling for mangled remains of life in the ambulances. And the new recruits with which I took the field on the 21st are not likely to cover themselves with glory, or insure to their commander the baton of a marshal."

"Ay, I heard when I was in the hospital that you had publicly shamed some of these recruits, and declared that you would rather resign than lead them again to battle."

"True; and at this moment, for so doing, I am the man most hated by the rabble who supplied those recruits."

The men, while thus conversing, had moved slowly on, and were now in front of a large *café*, from the interior of which came the sound of loud bravos and clappings of hands. Lemercier's curiosity was excited. "For what can be that applause?" he said; "let us look in and see."

The room was thronged. In the distance, on a small raised platform, stood a girl dressed in faded theatrical finery, making her obeisance to the crowd.

"Heavens!" exclaimed Frederic—"can I trust my eyes? Surely that is the once superb Julie: has she been dancing here?"

One of the loungers, evidently belonging to the same world as Lemercier, overheard the question, and answered politely: "No, Monsieur: she has been reciting verses, and really declaims very well, considering it is not her vocation. She has given us extracts from Victor Hugo and De Musset: and crowned all with a patriotic hymn by Gustave Rameau, —her old lover, if gossip be true."

Meanwhile De Mauléon, who at first had glanced over the scene with his usual air of calm and cold indifference, became suddenly struck by the girl's beautiful face, and gazed on it with a look of startled surprise.

"Who and what did you say that poor fair creature is M. Lemercier!"

"She is a Mademoiselle Julie Caumartin, and was a very popular *coryphée*. She has hereditary right to be a good dancer, as the daughter of a once more famous ornament of the ballet, *la belle* Léonie—whom you must have seen in your young days."

"Of course. Léonie—she married a M. Surville, a silly *bourgeoise gentilhomme*, who earned the hatred of Paris by taking her off the stage. So that is her daughter! I see no likeness to her mother—much handsomer. Why does she call herself Caumartin?"

"Oh," said Frederic, "a melancholy but trite story. Léonie was left a widow, and died in want. What could the poor young daughter do? She found a rich protector, who had influence to get her an appointment in the ballet: and there she did as most girls so circumstanced do—appeared under an assumed name, which she has since kept."

"I understand," said Victor, compassionately. "Poor thing! she has quitted the platform, and is coming this way, evidently to speak to you. I saw her eyes brighten as she caught sight of your face."

Lemercier attempted a languid air of modest self-complacency as the girl now approached him. "*Bon jour*, M. Frederic! *Ah, mon Dieu!* how thin you have grown! You have been ill?"

"The hardships of a military life, Mademoiselle. Ah, for the *beaux jours* and the peace we insisted on destroying under the Empire which we destroyed for listening to us! But you thrive well, I trust. I have seen you better dressed, but never in greater beauty."

The girl blushed as she replied, "Do you really think as you speak?"

"I could not speak more sincerely if I lived in the legendary House of Glass."

The girl clutched his arm, and said in suppressed tones, "Where is Gustave?"

"Gustave Rameau? I have no idea. Do you never see him now?"

"Never,—perhaps I never shall see him again; but when you do meet him, say that Julie owes to him her livelihood. An honest livelihood, Monsieur. He taught her to love verses—told her how to recite them. I am engaged at this *café*—you will find me here the same hour every day, in case—in case. You are good and kind, and will come and tell me that Gustave is well and happy even if he

forgets me. *Au revoir!* Stop, you do look, my poor Frederic, as if—as if ——pardon me, Monsieur Lemercier, is there anything I can do? Will you condescend to borrow from me? I am in funds."

Lemercier at that offer was nearly moved to tears. Famished though he was, he could not, however, have touched that girl's earnings.

"You are an angel of goodness, Mademoiselle! Ah, how I envy Gustave Rameau! No, I don't want aid. I am always a—*rentier*."

"*Bien!* and if you see Gustave, you will not forget."

"Rely on me. Come away," he said to De Mauléon; "I don't want to hear that girl repeat the sort of bombast the poets indite now-a-days. It is fustain; and that girl may have a brain of feather, but she has a heart of gold."

"True," said Victor, as they regained the street. "I overheard what she said to you. What an incomprehensible thing is a woman! how more incomprehensible still is a woman's love! Ah, pardon me; I must leave you. I see in the procession a poor woman known to me in better days."

De Mauléon walked towards the woman he spoke of—one of the long procession to the bakery—a child clinging to her robe. A pale grief-worn woman, still young, but with the weariness of age on her face, and the shadow of death on her child's.

"I think I see Madame Monnier," said De Mauléon, softly.

She turned and looked at him drearily. A year ago, she would have blushed if addressed by a stranger in a name not lawfully hers.

"Well," she said, in hollow accents broken by a cough; "I don't know you, Monsieur."

"Poor woman!" he resumed, walking beside her as she moved slowly on, while the eyes of other women in the procession stared at him hungrily. "And your child looks ill too. It is your youngest?"

"My only one! The others are in Père la Chaise. There are but few children alive in my street now. God has been very merciful, and taken them to Himself."

De Mauléon recalled the scene of a neat comfortable apartment, and the healthy happy children at play on the floor. The mortality among the little ones, especially in the *quartier* occupied by the working classes, had of late been terrible. The want of food, of fuel, the intense severity of the weather, had swept them off as by a pestilence.

"And Monnier—what of him? No doubt he is a National Guard, and has his pay?"

The woman made no answer, but hung down her head. She was stifling a sob. Till then her eyes seemed to have exhausted the last source of tears.

"He still lives?" continued Victor, pityingly: "he is not wounded?"

"No: he is well—in health; thank you kindly, Monsieur."

"But his pay is not enough to help you, and of course he can get no work. Excuse me if I stopped you. It is because I owed Armand Monnier a little debt for work, and I am ashamed to say that it quite escaped my memory in these terrible events. Allow me, Madame, to pay it to you," and he thrust his purse into her hand. "I think this contains about the sum I owed; if more or less, we will settle the difference later. Take care of yourself."

He was turning away, when the woman caught hold of him."

"Stay, Monsieur. May heaven bless you! —but—but—tell me what name I am to give to Armand. I can't think of any one who owed him money. It must have been before that dreadful strike, the beginning of all our woes. Ah, if it were allowed to curse any one, I fear my last breath would not be a prayer."

"You would curse the strike, or the master who did not forgive Armand's share in it?"

"No, no,—the cruel man who talked him into it—into all that has changed the best workman, the kindest heart—the—the—" again her voice died in sobs.

"And who was that man?" asked De Mauléon, falteringly.

"His name was Lebeau. If you were a poor man, I should say 'Shun him.'"

"I have heard of the name you mention; but if we mean the same person, Monnier cannot have met him lately. He has not been in Paris since the siege."

"I suppose not, the coward! He ruined us —us who were so happy before; and then, as Armand says, cast us away as instruments he had done with. But—but if you do know him, and do see him again, tell him—tell him not to complete his wrong—not to bring murder on Armand's soul. For Armand isn't what he

was—and has become, oh, so violent! I dare not take this money without saying who gave it. He would not take money as alms from an aristocrat. Hush! he beat me for taking money from the good Monsieur Raoul Vandemar—my poor Armand beat me!"

De Mauléon shuddered. "Say that it is from a customer whose rooms he decorated in his spare hours on his own account before the strike,—Monsieur ——;" here he uttered indistinctly some unpronounceable name and hurried off, soon lost as the streets grew darker. Amid groups of a higher order of men—military men, nobles, *ci-divant* deputies—among such ones his name stood very high. Not only his bravery in the recent sorties had been signal, but a strong belief in his military talents had become prevalent; and conjoined with the name he had before established as a political writer, and the remembrance of the vigor and sagacity with which he had opposed the war, he seemed certain, when peace and order became re-established, of a brilliant position and career in a future administration: not less because he had steadfastly kept aloof from the existing Government, which it was rumored, rightly or erroneously, that he had been solicited to join; and from every combination of the various democratic or discontented factions.

Quitting these more distinguished associates, he took his way alone towards the ramparts. The day was closing; the thunders of the cannon were dying down.

He passed by a wine-shop round which were gathered many of the worst specimens of the *Moblots* and National Guards, mostly drunk, and loudly talking in vehement abuse of generals and officers and commissariat. By one of the men, as he came under the glare of a petroleum lamp (there was gas no longer in the dismal city) he was recognized as the commander who had dared to insist on discipline, and disgrace honest patriots who claimed to themselves the sole option between fight and flight. The man was one of those patriots—one of the new recruits whom Victor had shamed and dismissed for mutiny and cowardice. He made a drunken plunge at his former chief, shouting, "*A bas l'aristo!* Comrades, this is the *coquin* De Mauléon who is paid by the Prussians for getting us killed." "*A la lanterne! A la lanterne!*" stammered and hiccupped others of the group; but they did not stir to execute their threat. Dimly seen as the stern face and sinewy form of the threatened man was by their drowsied eyes, the name of De Mauléon, the man without fear of a foe, and without ruth for a mutineer, sufficed to protect him from outrage; and with a slight movement of his arm that sent his denouncer reeling against the lamp-post, De Mauléon passed on:—when another man, in the uniform of a National Guard, bounded from the door of the tavern, crying with a loud voice, "Who said De Mauléon?—let me look on him:" and Victor, who had strode on with slow lion-like steps, cleaving the crowd, turned, and saw before him in the gleaming light a face, in which the bold, frank, intelligent aspect of former days was lost in a wild, reckless, savage expression—the face of Armand Monnier.

"Ha! are you really Victor de Mauléon?" asked Monnier, not fiercely, but under his breath,—in that sort of stage whisper, which is the natural utterance of excited men under the mingled influence of potent drink and hoarded rage.

"Certainly; I am Victor de Mauléon."

"And you were in command of the—— company of the National Guard on the 30th of November at Champigny and Villiers?"

"I was."

"And you shot with your own hand an officer belonging to another company who refused to join yours?"

"I shot a cowardly soldier who ran away from the enemy, and seemed a ringleader of other runaways; and in so doing, I saved from dishonor the best part of his comrades."

"The man was no coward. He was an enlightened Frenchman, and worth fifty of such *aristos* as you; and he knew better than his officers that he was to be led to an idle slaughter. Idle—I say idle. What was France the better, how was Paris the safer, for the senseless butchery of that day? You mutined against a wiser general that Saint Trochu when you murdered that mutiner."

Armand Monnier, you are not quite sober to-night, or I would argue with you that question. But you no doubt are brave: how and why do you take the part of a runaway?"

"How and why? He was my brother, and you own you murdered him: my brother—the sagest head in Paris. If I had listened to him,

I should not be,—*bah!*—no matter now what I am."

"I could not know he was your brother; but if he had been mine I would have done the same."

Here Victor's lip quivered, for Monnier griped him by the arm, and looked him in the face with wild stony eyes.

"I recollect that voice! Yet—yet—you say you are a noble, a Vicomte—Victor de Mauléon! and you shot my brother!"

Here he passed his left hand rapidly over his forehead. The fumes of wine still clouded his mind, but rays of intelligence broke through the cloud. Suddenly he said in a loud, and calm, and natural voice—

"Mons. le Vicomte, you accost me as Armand Monnier—pray how do you know my name?"

"How should I not know it? I have looked into the meetings of the 'Clubs *rouges*.' I have heard you speak, and naturally asked your name. *Bon soir*, M. Monnier! When you reflect in cooler moments, you will see that if patriots excuse Brutus for first dishonoring and then executing his own son, an officer charged to defend his country may be surely pardoned for slaying a runaway to whom he was no relation, when in slaying he saved the man's name and kindred from dishonor—unless, indeed, you insist on telling the world why he was slain."

"I know your voice — I know it. Every sound becomes clearer to my ear. And if——"

But while Monnier thus spoke, De Mauléon had hastened on. Monnier looked round, saw him gone, but did not pursue. He was just intoxicated enough to know that his footsteps were not steady, and he turned back to the wine-shop and asked surlily for more wine. Could you have seen him then as he leant swinging himself to and fro against the wall—had you known the man two years ago, you would have been a brute if you felt disgust. You could only have felt that profound compassion with which we gaze on a great royalty fallen. For the grandest of all royalties is that which takes its crown from Nature, needing no accident of birth. And Nature made the mind of Armand Monnier king-like; endowed it with lofty scorn of meanness and falsehood and dishonor, with warmth and tenderness of heart which had glow enough to spare from ties of kindred and hearth and home, to extend to those distant circles of humanity over which royal natures would fain extend the shadow of their sceptre.

How had the royalty of the man's nature fallen thus? Royalty rarely falls from its own constitutional faults. It falls when, ceasing to be royal, it becomes subservient to bad advisers. And what bad advisers, always appealing to his better qualities and so enlisting his worser, had discrowned this mechanic?

"A little knowledge is a dangerous thing,"

says the old-fashioned poet. "Not so," says the modern philosopher; "a little knowledge is safer than no knowledge." Possibly, as all individuals and all communities must go through the stage of a little knowledge before they can arrive at that of much knowledge, the philosopher's assertion may be right in the long-run, and applied to mankind in general. But there is a period, as there is a class, in which a little knowledge tends to terrible demoralization. And Armand Monnier lived in that period and was one of that class. The little knowledge that his mind, impulsive and ardent, had picked up out of books that warred with the great foundations of existing society, had originated in ill advices. A man stored with much knowledge would never have let Madame de Grantmesnil's denunciations of marriage rites, or Louis Blanc's vindication of Robespierre as the representative of the working against the middle class, influence his practical life. He would have assessed such opinions at their real worth; and whatever that worth might seem to him, would not to such opinions have committed the conduct of his life. Opinion is not fateful: conduct is. A little knowledge crazes an earnest, warm-blooded, powerful creature like Armand Monnier into a fanatic. He takes an opinion which pleases him as a revelation from the gods; that opinion shapes his conduct; that conduct is his fate. Woe to the philosopher who serenely flings before the little knowledge of the artisan, dogmas as harmless as the Atlantis of Plato if only to be discussed by philosophers, and deadly as the torches of Até if seized as articles of a creed by fanatics! But thrice woe to the artisan who makes himself the zealot of the Dogma!

Poor Armand acts on the opinions he adopts; proves his contempt for the marriage state by

living with the wife of another; resents, as natures so inherently manly must do, the Society that visits on her his defiance of its laws; throws himself, head foremost, against that Society altogether; necessarily joins all who have other reasons for hostility to Society; he himself having every inducement not to join indiscriminate strikes—high wages, a liberal employer, ample savings, the certainty of soon becoming employer himself. No; that is not enough to the fanatic: he persists on being dupe and victim. He, this great king of labor, crowned by Nature, and cursed with that degree of little knowledge which does not comprehend how much more is required before a schoolboy would admit it to be knowledge at all,—he rushes into the maddest of all speculations—that of the artisan with little knowledge and enormous faith—that which intrusts the safety and repose and dignity of life to some ambitious adventurer, who uses his warm heart for the adventurer's frigid purpose, much as the lawyer-government of September used the Communists,—much as, in every revolution of France, a Bertrand has used a Raton—much as, till the sound of the last trumpet, men very much worse than Victor de Mauléon will use men very much better than Armand Monnier, if the Armand Monniers disdain the modesty of an Isaac Newton on hearing that a theorem to which he had given all the strength of his patient intellect was disputed: "It may be so;" meaning, I suppose, that it requires a large amount of experience ascertained before a man of much knowledge becomes that which a man of little knowledge is at a jump—the fanatic of an experiment untried.

CHAPTER II.

Scarcely had De Mauléon quitted Lemercier before the latter was joined by two loungers scarcely less famished than himself—Savarin and De Brézé. Like himself, too, both had been sufferers from illness, though not of a nature to be consigned to an hospital. All manner of diseases then had combined to form the pestilence which filled the streets with unregarded hearses—bronchitis, pneumonia, small-pox, a strange sort of spurious dysentery much more speedily fatal than the genuine. The three men, a year before so sleek, looked like ghosts under the withering sky; yet all three retained embers of the native Parisian humor, which their very breath on meeting sufficed to kindle up into jubilant sparks or rapid flashes.

"There are two consolations," said Savarin, as the friends strolled or rather crawled towards the Boulevards—"two consolations for the *gourmet* and for the proprietor in these days of trial for the gourmand, because the price of truffles is come down."

"Truffles!" gasped De Brézé, with watering mouth; "impossible! They are gone with the age of gold."

"Not so. I speak on the best authority—my laundress; for she attends the *succursale* in the Rue de Chateaudun; and if the poor woman, being, luckily for me, a childless widow, gets a morsel she can spare, she sells it to me."

"Sells it!" feebly exclaimed Lemercier, "Crœsus! you have money, then, and can buy?"

"Sells it—on credit! I am to pension her for life if I live to have money again. Don't interrupt me. This honest woman goes this morning to the *succursale*. I promise myself a delicious *bifteck* of horse. She gains the *succursale*, and the *employé* informs her that there is nothing left in his store except—truffles. A glut of those in the market allows him to offer her a bargain—seven francs *la boîte*. Send me seven francs, De Brézé, and you shall share the banquet."

De Brézé shook his head expressively.

"But," resumed Savarin, "though credit exists no more except with my laundress, upon terms of which the usury is necessarily proportioned to the risk, yet, as I had the honor before to observe, there is comfort for the proprietor. The instinct of property is imperishable."

"Not in the house where I lodge," said Lemercier. "Two soldiers were billeted there; and during my stay in the ambulance they enter my rooms, and cart away all of the little furniture left there, except a bed and a table. Brought before a court-martial, they defend themselves by saying, 'The rooms were abandoned.' The excuse was held valid. They were let off with a reprimand and a promise

to restore what was not already disposed of. They have restored me another table and four chairs."

"Nevertheless, they had the instinct of property, though erroneously developed otherwise they would not have deemed any excuse for their act necessary. Now for my instance of the inherent tenacity of that instinct. A worthy citizen in want of fuel sees a door in a garden wall, and naturally carries off the door. He is apprehended by a *gendarme* who sees the act. '*Voleur*,' he cries to the *gendarme*, 'do you want to rob me of my property?' 'That door your property? I saw you take it away.' 'You confess,' cried the citizen, triumphantly—'you confess that is my property; for you saw me appropriate it.' Thus you see how imperishable is the instinct of property. No sooner does it disappear as yours than it reappears as mine."

"I would laugh if I could," said Lemercier, "but such a convulsion would be fatal. *Dieu de dieu*, how empty I am!" He reeled as he spoke, and clung to De Brézé for support. De Brézé had the reputation of being the most selfish of men. But at that moment, when a generous man might be excused for being selfish enough to desire to keep the little that he had for his own reprieve from starvation, this egotist became superb. "Friends," he cried, with enthusiasm, "I have something yet in my pocket; we will dine, all three of us."

"Dine!" faltered Lemercier. "Dine! I have not dined since I left the hospital. I breakfasted yesterday—on two mice upon toast. Dainty, but not nutritious. And I shared them with Fox."

"Fox! Fox lives still, then?" cried De Brézé, startled.

"In a sort of way he does. But one mouse since yesterday morning is not much; and he can't expect that every day."

"Why don't you take him out?" asked Savarin. "Give him a chance of picking up a bone somewhere."

"I dare not; he would be picked up himself. Dogs are getting very valuable: they sell for 50 francs apiece. Come De Brézé, where are we to dine?"

I and Savarin can dine at the London Tavern upon rat *pâté* or jugged cat. But it would be impertinence to invite a satrap like yourself, who has a whole dog in his larder—a dish of 50 francs—a dish for a king. Adieu, my dear Frederic. *Allons*, Savarin."

"I feasted you on better meats than dog when I could afford it," said Frederic, plaintively; "and the first time you invite me you retract the invitation. Be it so. *Bon appétit.*"

"*Bah!*" said De Brézé, catching Frederic's arm as he turned to depart. "Of course I was but jesting. Only another day, when my pockets will be empty, do think what an excellent thing a roasted dog is, and make up your mind while Fox has still some little flesh on his bones."

"Flesh!" said Savarin, detaining them "Look! See how right Voltaire was in saying, 'Amusement is the first necessity of civilized man.' Paris can do without bread; Paris still retains Polichinello."

He pointed to the puppet-show, round which a crowd, not of a children alone, but of men—middle-aged and old—were collected; while sous were dropped into the tin handed round by a squalid boy.

"And, *mon ami*," whispered De Brézé to Lemercier, with the voice of a tempting fiend, "observe how Punch is without his dog."

It was true. The dog was gone,—its place supplied by a melancholy emaciated cat.

Frederic crawled towards the squalid boy. "What has become of Punch's dog?"

"We ate him last Sunday. Next Sunday we shall have the cat in a pie," said the urchin, with a sensual smack of the lips.

"O Fox! Fox!" murmured Frederic, as the three men went slowly down through the darkening streets—the roar of the Prussian guns heard afar, while distinct and near rang the laugh of the idlers round the Punch without a dog.

CHAPTER III.

While De Brézé and his friends were feasting at the *Café Anglais*, and faring better than the host had promised—for the bill of fare comprised such luxuries as ass, mule, peas, fried potatoes, and champagne (champagne in some mysterious way was inexhaustible during the time of famine)—a very different group had assembled in the rooms of Isaura Cicogna. She and the Venosta had hitherto escaped the

extreme destitution to which many richer persons had been reduced. It is true that Isaura's fortune, placed in the hands of the absent Louvier, and invested in the new street that was to have been, brought no return. It was true that in that street the Venosta, dreaming of cent. per cent., had invested all her savings. But the Venosta, at the first announcement of war, had insisted on retaining in hand a small sum from the amount Isaura had received from her "*roman*," that might suffice for current expenses, and with yet more acute foresight had laid in stores of provisions and feul immediately after the probability of a siege became apparent.

But even the provident mind of the Venosta had never foreseen that the siege would endure so long, or that the prices of all articles of necessity would rise so high. And meanwhile all resources—money, fuel, provisions—had been largely drawn upon by the charity and benevolence of Isaura, without much remonstrance on the part of the Venosta, whose nature was very accessible to pity. Unfortunately, too, of late money and provisions had failed to Monsieur and Madame Rameau, their income consisting partly of rents, no longer paid, and the profits of a sleeping partnership in the old shop, from which custom had departed; so that they came to share the fireside and meals at the rooms of their son's *fiancée* with little scruple, because utterly unaware that the money retained and the provisions stored by the Venosta were now nearly exhausted.

The patriotic ardor which had first induced the elder Rameau to volunteer his services as a National Guard, had been ere this cooled if not suppressed, first by the hardships of the duty, and then by the disorderly conduct of his associates, and their ribald talk and obscene songs. He was much beyond the age at which he could be registered. His son was, however, compelled to become his substitute, though from his sickly health and delicate frame attached to that portion of the National Guard which took no part in actual engagements, and was supposed to do work on the ramparts and maintain order in the city.

In that duty, so opposed to his tastes and habits, Gustave signalized himself as one of the loudest declaimers against the imbecility of the Government, and in the demand for immediate and energetic action, no matter at what loss of life, on the part of all—except the heroic force to which he himself was attached. Still, despite his military labors, Gustave found leisure to contribute to Red journals, and his contributions paid him tolerably well. To do him justice, his parents concealed from him the extent of their destitution; they, on their part, not aware that he was so able to assist them, rather fearing that he himself had nothing else for support but his scanty pay as a National Guard. In fact, of late the parents and son had seen little of each other. M. Rameau, though a Liberal politician, was Liberal as a tradesman, not as a Red Republican or a Socialist. And, though little heeding his son's theories while the Empire secured him from the practical effect of them, he was now as sincerely frightened at the chance of the Communists becoming rampant as most of the Parisian tradesmen were. Madame Rameau, on her side, though she had the dislike to aristocrats which was prevalent with her class, was a staunch Roman Catholic; and seeing in the disasters that had befallen her country the punishment justly incurred by its sins, could not but be shocked by the opinions of Gustave, though she little knew that he was the author of certain articles in certain journals, in which these opinions were proclaimed with a vehemence far exceeding that which they assumed in his conversation. She had spoken to him with warm anger, mixed with passionate tears, on his irreligious principles; and from that moment Gustave shunned to give her another opportunity of insulting his pride and deprecating his wisdom.

Partly to avoid meeting his parents, partly because he recoiled almost as much from the *ennui* of meeting the other visitors at her apartments—the Paris ladies associated with her in the ambulance, Raoul de Vandemar, whom he especially hated, and the Abbé Vertpré, who had recently come into intimate friendship with both the Italian ladies—his visits to Isaura had become exceedingly rare. He made his incessant military duties the pretext for absenting himself; and now, on this evening, there were gathered round Isaura's hearth—on which burned almost the last of the hoarded fuel—the Venosta, the two Rameaus, the Abbé Vertpré, who was attached as confessor to the society of which Isaura was so zealous a member.

The old priest and the young poetess had become dear friends. There is in the nature of a woman (and especially of a woman at once so gifted and so childlike as Isaura, combining an innate tendency towards faith with a restless inquisitiveness of intellect, which is always suggesting query or doubt) a craving for something afar from the sphere of her sorrow, which can only be obtained through that "bridal of of the earth and sky" which we call religion. And hence to natures like Isaura's that link between the woman and the priest, which the philosophy of France has never been able to dissever.

"It is growing late," said Madame Rameau; "I am beginning to feel uneasy. Our dear Isaura is not yet returned."

"You need be under no apprehension," said the Abbé. "The ladies attached to the ambulance of which she is so tender and zealous a sister incur no risk. There are always brave men related to the sick and wounded who see to the safe return of the women. My poor Raoul visits that ambulance daily. His kinsman, M. Rochebriant, is there among the wounded."

"Not seriously hurt, I hope," said the Venosta; "not disfigured? He was so handsome; it is only the ugly warrior whom a scar on the face improves."

"Don't be alarmed, Signora; the Prussian guns spared his face. His wounds in themselves were not dangerous, but he lost a good deal of blood. Raoul and the Christian brothers found him insensible among a heap of the slain."

"M. de Vandemar seems to have very soon recovered the shock of his poor brother's death," said Madame Rameau. "There is very little heart in an aristocrat."

The Abbé's mild brow contracted. "Have more charity, my daughter. It is because Raoul's sorrow for his lost brother is so deep and so holy that he devotes himself more than ever to the service of the Father which is in heaven. He said, a day or two after the burial, when plans for a momument to Enguerrand were submitted to him—'May my prayer be vouchsafed, and my life be a memorial of him more acceptable to his gentle spirit than monuments of bronze or marble. May I be divinely guided and sustained in my desire to do such good acts as he would have done had he been spared longer to earth. And whenever tempted to weary, may my conscience whisper, Betray not the trust left to thee by thy brother, lest thou be not reunited to him at last.'"

"Pardon me, pardon!" murmured Madame Rameau, humbly, while the Venosta burst into tears.

The Abbé, though a most sincere and earnest ecclesiastic, was a cheery and genial man of the world; and, in order to relieve Madame Rameau from the painful self-reproach he had before excited, he turned the conversation. "I must beware, however," he said, with his pleasant laugh, "as to the company in which I interfere in family questions; and especially in which I defend my poor Raoul from any charge brought against him. For some good friend this day sent me a terrible organ of communistic philosophy, in which we humble priests are very roughly handled, and I myself am specially singled out by name as a pestilent intermeddler in the affairs of private households. I am said to set the women against the brave men who are friends of the people, and am cautioned by very truculent threats to cease from such villanous practices." And here with a dry humor that turned into ridicule what would otherwise have excited disgust and indignation among his listeners, he read aloud passages replete with the sort of false eloquence which was then the vogue among the Red journals. In these passages, not only the Abbé was pointed out for popular execration, but Raoul de Vandemar, though not expressly named, was clearly indicated as a pupil of the Abbé's, the type of a lay Jesuit.

The Venosta alone did not share in the contemptuous laughter with which the inflated style of these diatribes inspired the Rameaus. Her simple Italian mind was horror-stricken by language which the Abbé treated with ridicule.

"Ah!" said M. Rameau, "I guess the author—that firebrand Felix Pyat."

"No," answered the Abbé; "the writer signs himself by the name of a more learned atheist—Diderot *le jeune*."

Here the door opened, and Raoul entered, accompanying Isaura. A change had come over the face of the young Vandemar since his brother's death. The lines about the mouth had deepened, the cheeks had lost their rounded contour and grown somewhat hollow.

But the expression was as serene as ever, perhaps even less pensively melancholy. His whole aspect was that of a man who has sorrowed, but been supported in sorrow; perhaps it was more sweet—certainly it was more lofty.

And, as if there were in the atmosphere of his presence something that communicated the likeness of his own soul to others, since Isaura had been brought into his companionship, her own lovely face had caught the expression that prevailed in his—that, too, had become more sweet—that, too, had become more lofty.

The friendship that had grown up between these two young mourners was of a very rare nature. It had in it no sentiment that could ever warm into the passion of human love. Indeed, had Isaura's heart been free to give away, love for Raoul de Vandemar would have seemed to her a profanation. He was never more priestly than when he was most tender. And the tenderness of Raoul towards her was that of some saint-like nature towards the acolyte whom it attracted upwards. He had once, just before Enguerrand's death, spoken to Isaura with a touching candor as to his own predilection for a monastic life. "The worldly avocations that open useful and honorable careers for others have no charm for me. I care not for riches nor power, nor honors nor fame. The austerities of the conventual life have no terror for me; on the contrary, they have a charm, for with them are abstraction from earth and meditation on heaven. In earlier years I might, like other men, have cherished dreams of human love, and felicity in married life, but for the sort of veneration with which I regarded one to whom I owe—humanly speaking—whatever of good there may be in me. Just when first taking my place among the society of young men who banish from their life all thought of another, I came under the influence of a women who taught me to see that holiness was beauty. She gradually associated me with her acts of benevolence, and from her I learned to love God too well not to be indulgent to his creatures. I know not whether the attachment I felt to her could have been inspired in one who had not from childhood conceived a romance, not perhaps justified by history, for the ideal images of chivalry. My feeling for her at first was that of the pure and poetic homage which a young knight was permitted, *sans reproche*, to render to some fair queen or *châtelaine*, whose colors he wore in the lists, whose spotless repute he would have perilled his life to defend. But soon even that sentiment, pure as it was, became chastened from all breath of earthly love, in proportion as the admiration refined itself into reverence. She has often urged me to marry, but I have no bride on this earth. I do but want to see Enguerrand happily married, and then I quit the world for the cloister."

But after Enguerrand's death, Raoul resigned all idea of the convent. That evening, as he attended to their homes Isaura and the other ladies attached to the ambulance, he said, in answer to inquiries about his mother, "She is resigned and calm. I have promised her I will not, while she lives, bury her other son: I renounce my dreams of the monastery."

Raoul did not remain many minutes at Isaura's. The Abbé accompanied him on his way home. "I have a request to make to you," said the former; "you know, of course, your distant cousin the Vicomte de Mauléon?"

"Yes. Not so well as I ought, for Enguerrand liked him."

"Well enough, at all events, to call on him with a request which I am commissioned to make, but it might come better from you as a kinsman. I am a stranger to him, and I know not whether a man of that sort would not regard as an officious intermeddling any communication made to him by a priest. The matter, however, is a very simple one. At the convent of —— there is a poor nun who is, I fear, dying. She has an intense desire to see M. de Mauléon, whom she declares to be her uncle, and her only surviving relative. The laws of the convent are not too austere to prevent the interview she seeks in such a case.

I should add that I am not acquainted with her previous history. I am not the confessor of the sistorhood; he, poor man, was badly wounded by a chance ball a few days ago when attached to an ambulance on the ramparts. As soon at the surgeon would allow him to see any one, he sent for me, and bade me go to the nun I speak of—Sister Ursula. It seems that he had informed her that M. de Mauléon was at Paris, and had promised to ascertain

his address. His wound had prevented his doing so, but he trusted to me to procure the information. I am well acquainted with the Supérieure of the convent, and I flatter myself that she holds me in esteem. I had therefore no difficulty to obtain her permission to see this poor nun, which I did this evening. She implored me for the peace of her soul to lose no time in finding out M. de Mauléon's address, and entreating him to visit her. Lest he should demur, I was to give him the name by which he had known her in the world—Louise Duval. Of course I obeyed. The address of a man who has so distinguished himself in this unhappy siege I very easily obtained, and repaired at once to M. de Mauléon's apartment. I there learned that he was from home, and it was uncertain whether he would not spend the night on the ramparts."

"I will not fail to see him early in the morning," said Raoul, "and execute your commission."

CHAPTER IV.

De Mauléon was somewhat surprised by Raoul's visit the next morning. He had no great liking for a kinsman whose politely distant reserve towards him, in contrast to poor Enguerrand's genial heartiness, had much wounded his sensitive self-respect; nor could he comprehend the religious scuples which forbade Raoul to take a soldier's share in the battle-field, though in seeking there to save the lives of others so fearlessly hazarding his own life.

"Pardon," said Raoul, with his sweet mournful smile, "the unseasonable hour at which I disturb you. But your duties on the ramparts and mine in the hospital begin early, and I have promised the Abbé Vertpré to communicate a message of a nature which perhaps you may deem pressing." He proceeded at once to repeat what the Abbé had communicated to him the night before relative to the illness and the request of the nun.

"Louise Duval!" exclaimed the Vicomte,—"discovered at last, and a *relegieuse!* Ah! I now understand why she never sought me out when I reappeared at Paris. Tidings of that sort do not penetrate the walls of a convent. I am greately obliged to you, M. de Vandemar, for the trouble you have so kindly taken. This poor nun is related to me, and I will at once obey the summons. But this convent *des*—— I am ashamed to say I know not where it is. A long way off, I suppose?"

"Allow me to be your guide," said Raoul; I should take it as a favor to be allowed to see a little more of a man whom my lost brother held in such esteem."

Victor was touched by this conciliatory speech, and in a few minutes more the two men were on their way to the convent on the other side of the Seine.

Victor commenced the conversation by a warm and heartfelt tribute to Enguerrand's character, and memory. "I never," he said, "knew a nature more rich in the most endearing qualities of youth; so gentle, so high-spirited, rendering every virtue more attractive, and redeeming such few faults or foibles as youth so situated and so tempted cannot wholly escape, with an urbanity not conventional, not artificial, but reflected from the frankness of a genial temper and the tenderness of a generous heart. Be comforted for his loss, my kinsman. A brave death was the proper crown of that beautiful life."

Raoul made no answer, but pressed gratefully the arm now linked within his own. The companions walked on in silence; Victor's mind settling on the visit he was about to make to the niece so long mysteriously lost, and now so unexpectedly found. Louise had inspired him with a certain interest from her beauty and force of character, but never with any warm affection. He felt relieved to find that her life had found its close in the sanctuary of the convent He had never divested himself of a certain fear, inspired by Louvier's statement, that she might live to bring scandal and disgrace on the name he had with so much difficulty, and after so lengthened an anguish, partially cleared in his own person.

Raoul left de Mauléon at the gate of the convent, and took his way towards the hospitals where he visited, and the poor whom he relieved.

Victor was conducted silently into the convent *parloir;* and, after waiting there several minutes, the door opened, and the Supérieure entered. As she advanced towards him, with stately step and solemn visage, de Mauléon recoiled, and uttered a half-suppressed excla-

mation that partook both of amaze and awe. Could it be possible? Was this majestic woman, with the grave impassable aspect, once the ardent girl whose tender letters he had cherished through stormy years, and only burned on the night before the most perilous of his battle-fields? This the one, the sole one, whom in his younger dreams he had seen as his destined wife? It was so—it was. Doubt vanished when he heard her voice; and yet how different every tone, every accent, from those of the low, soft, thrilling music that had breathed in the voice of old!

"M. de Mauléon," said the Supérieure, calmly, "I grieve to sadden you by very mournful intelligence. Yesterday evening, when the Abbé undertook to convey to you the request of our Sister Ursula, although she was beyond mortal hope of recovery—as otherwise you will conceive that I could not have relaxed the rules of this house so as to sanction your visit—there was no apprehension of immediate danger. It was believed that her sufferings would be prolonged for some days. I saw her late last night before retiring to my cell, and she seemed even stronger than she had been for the last week. A sister remained at watch in her cell. Towards morning she fell into apparently quiet sleep, and in that sleep she passed away." The Supérieure here crossed herself, and murmured pious words in Latin.

"Dead! my poor niece!" said Victor, feelingly, roused from his stun at the first sight of the Supérieure by her measured tones, and the melancholy information she so composedly conveyed to him. "I cannot, then, even learn why she so wished to see me once more,—or what she might have requested at my hands!"

"Pardon, M. le Vicomte. Such sorrowful consolation I have resolved to afford you, not without scruples of conscience, but not without sanction of the excellent Abbé Vertpré, whom I summoned early this morning to decide my duties in the sacred office I hold. As soon as Sister Ursula heard of your return to Paris, she obtained my permission to address to you a letter, subjected, when finished, to my perusal and sanction. She felt that she had much on her mind which her feeble state might forbid her to make known to you in conversation with sufficient fulness; and as she could only have seen you in presence of one of the sisters, she imagined that there would also be less restraint in a written communication. In fine, her request was that, when you called, I might first place this letter in your hands, and allow you time to read it, before being admitted to her presence; when a few words, conveying your promise to attend to the wishes with which you would then be acquainted, would suffice for an interview in her exhausted condition. Do I make myself understood?"

"Certainly, Madame,—and the letter?"

"She had concluded last evening; and when I took leave of her later in the night, she placed it in my hands for approval. M. le Vicomte, it pains me to say that there is much in the tone of that letter which I grieve for and condemn. And it was my intention to point this out to our sister at morning, and tell her that passages must be altered before I could give to you the letter. Her sudden decease deprived me of this opportunity. I could not, of course, alter or erase a line—a word. My only option was to suppress the letter altogether, or give it you intact. The Abbé thinks that, on the whole, my duty does not forbid the dictate of my own impulse—my own feelings; and I now place this letter in your hands."

De Mauléon took a packet, unsealed, from the thin white fingers of the Supérieure; and as he bent to receive it, lifted towards her eyes eloquent with a sorrowful, humble pathos, in which it was impossible for the heart of a woman who had loved not to see a reference to the past which the lips did not dare to utter.

A faint, scarce-perceptible blush stole over the marble cheek of the nun. But, with an exquisite delicacy, in which survived the woman while reigned the nun, she replied to the appeal.

"M. Victor de Mauléon, before, having thus met, we part for ever, permit a poor *religieuse* to say with what joy—a joy rendered happier because it was tearful—I have learned through the Abbé Vertpré that the honor which, as between man and man, no one who had once known you could ever doubt, you have lived to vindicate from calumny."

"Ah; you have heard that—at last, at last!"

"I repeat—of the honor thus deferred, I

never doubted." The Supérieure hurried on. "Greater joy it has been to me to hear from the same venerable source that, while found bravest among the defenders of your country, you are clear from all alliance with the assailants of your God. Continue so, continue so, Victor de Mauléon."

She retreated to the door, and then turned towards him with a look in which all the marble had melted away; adding, with words more formally nunlike, yet unmistakably womanlike, than those which had gone before,—"That to the last you may be true to God, is a prayer never by me omitted."

She spoke, and vanished.

In a kind of dim and dreamlike bewilderment, Victor de Mauléon found himself without the walls of the convent. Mechanically, as a man does when the routine of his life is presented to him, from the first Minister of State to the poor clown at a suburban theatre, doomed to appear at their posts, to prose on a Beer Bill, or grin through a horse-collar, though their hearts are bleeding at every pore with some household or secret affliction, —mechanically de Mauléon went his way towards the ramparts, at a section of which he daily drilled his raw recruits. Proverbial for his severity towards those who offended, for the cordiality of his praise of those who pleased his soldierly judgment, no change of his demeanor was visible that morning, save that he might be somewhat milder to the one, somewhat less hearty to the other. This routine duty done, he passed slowly towards a more deserted because a more exposed part of the defences, and seated himself on the frozen sward alone. The cannon thundered around him. He heard unconsciously: from time to time an *obus* hissed and splintered close at his feet;—he saw with abstracted eye. His soul was with the past; and, brooding over all that in the past lay buried there, came over him a conviction of the vanity of the human earth-bound objects for which we burn or freeze, far more absolute than had grown out of the worldly cynicism connected with his worldly ambition. The sight of that face, associated with the one pure romance of his reckless youth, the face of one so estranged, so serenely aloft from all memories of youth, of romance, of passion, smote him in the midst of the new hopes of the new career, as the look on the skull of the woman he had so loved and so mourned, when disburied from her grave, smote the brilliant noble who became the stern reformer of La Trappe. And while thus gloomily meditating, the letter of the poor Louise Duval was forgotten. She whose existence had so troubled, and crossed, and partly marred the lives of others,—she, scarcely dead, and already forgotten by her nearest of kin. Well—had she not forgotten, put wholly out of her mind, all that was due to those much nearer to her than is an uncle to a niece?

The short, bitter, sunless day was advancing towards its decline, before Victor roused himself with a quiek impatient start from his reverie, and took forth the letter from the dead nun.

It began with expressions of gratitude, of joy at the thought that she should see him again before she died, thank him for his past kindness, and receive, she trusted, his assurance that he would attend to her last remorseful injunctions. I pass over much that followed in the explanation of events in her life sufficiently known to the reader. She stated, as the strongest reason why she had refused the hand of Louvier, her knowledge that she should in due time become a mother—a fact concealed from Victor, secure that he would then urge her not to annul her informal marriage, but rather insist on the ceremonies that would render it valid. She touched briefly on her confidential intimacy with Madame Marigny, the exchange of name and papers, her confinement in the neighborhood of Aix, the child left to the care of the nurse, the journey to Munich to find the false Louise Duval was no more. The documents obtained through the agent of her easy-tempered kinsman, the late Marquis de Rochebriant, and her subsequent domestication in the house of the Von Rudesheims—all this it is needless to do more here than briefly recapitulate. The letter then went on:

"While thus kindly treated by the family with whom nominally a governess, I was on the terms of a friend with Signor Ludovico Cicogna, an Italian of noble birth. He was the only man I ever cared for. I loved him with frail human passion. I could not tell him my true history. I could not tell him that I had a child; such intelligence would have made him renounce me at once. He had a daughter, still but an infant, by a former marriage, then brought up in France. He wished to take her to his house, and his second wife to supply the place of her mother. What was I to do

with the child I had left near Aix? While doubtful and distracted, I read an advertisement in the journals to the effect that a French lady, then staying in Coblentz, wished to adopt a female child not exceeding the age of six: the child to be wholly resigned to her by the parents, she undertaking to rear and provide for it as her own. I resolved to go to Coblentz at once. I did so. I saw this lady. She seemed in affluent circumstances, yet young, but a confirmed invalid, confined the greater part of the day to her sofa by some malady of the spine. She told me very frankly her story. She had been a professional dancer on the stage, had married respectably, quitted the stage, become a widow, and shortly afterwards been seized with the complaint that would probably for life keep her a secluded prisoner in her room. Thus afflicted, and without tie, interest, or object in the world, she conceived the idea of adopting a child that she might bring up to tend and cherish her as a daughter. In this, the imperative condition was that the child should never be resought by the parents. She was pleased by my manner and appearance: she did not wish her adopted daughter to be the child of peasants. She asked me for no references,—made no enquiries. She said cordially that she wished for no knowledge that, through any indiscretion of her own, communicated to the child, might lead her to seek the discovery of her real parents. In fine, I left Coblentz on the understanding that I was to bring the infant, and if it pleased Madame Surville, the agreement was concluded.

"I then repaired to Aix. I saw the child. Alas! unnatural mother that I was, the sight only more vividly before me the sense of my own perilous position. Yet the child was lovely! a likeness of myself, but lovelier far, for it was a pure, innocent, gentle loveliness. And they told her to call me '*Maman*.' Oh, did I not relent when I heard that name? No; it jarred on my ear as a word of reproach and shame. In walking with the infant towards the railway station, imagine my dismay when suddenly I met the man who had been taught to believe me dead. I soon discovered that his dismay was equal to my own,—that I had nothing to fear from his desire to claim me. It did occur to me for a moment to resign his child to him. But when he shrank reluctantly from a half suggestion to that effect, my pride was wounded, my conscience absolved. And, after all, it might be unsafe to my future to leave with him any motive for retracing me. I left him hastily. I have never seen nor heard of him more. I took the child to Coblentz. Madame Surville was charmed with its prettiness and prattle,—charmed still more when I rebuked the poor infant for calling me '*Maman*,' and said, 'Thy real mother is here.' Freed from my trouble, I returned to the kind German roof I had quitted, and shortly after became the wife of Ludovico Cicogna.

"My punishment soon began. His was a light, fickle, pleasure-hunting nature. He soon grew weary of me. My very love made me unamiable to him. I became irritable, jealous, exacting. His daughter, who now came to live with us, was another subject of discord. I knew that he loved her better than me. I became a harsh stepmother; and Ludovico's reproaches, vehemently made, nursed all my angriest passions. But a son of this new marriage was born to myself. My pretty Luigi! how my heart became wrapped up in him! Nursing him, I forgot resentment against his father. Well, poor Cicogna fell ill and died. I mourned him sincerely; but my boy was left. Poverty then fell on me,—poverty extreme. Cicogna's sole income was derived from a post in the Austrian dominion in Italy, and ceased with it. He received a small pension in compensation; that died with him.

"At this time an Englishman, with whom Ludovico had made acquaintance in Venice, and who visited often at our house in Verona, offered me his hand. He had taken an extraordinary liking to Isaura, Cicogna's daughter by his first marriage. But I think his proposal was dictated partly by compassion for me, and more by affection for her. For the sake of my boy Luigi I married him. He was a good man, of retired learned habits with which I had no sympathy. His companionship overwhelmed me with *ennui*. But I bore it patiently for Luigi's sake. God saw that my heart was as much as ever estranged from Him, and He took away my all on earth—my boy. Then in my desolation I turned to our Holy Church for comfort. I found a friend in the priest, my confessor. I was startled to learn from him how guilty I had been—was still. Pushing to an extreme the doctrines of the Church, he would not allow that my first marriage, though null by law, was void in the eyes of Heaven. Was not the death of the child I so cherished a penalty due to my sin towards the child I had abandoned?

"These thoughts pressed on me night and day. With the consent and approval of the good priest, I determined to quit the roof of M. Selby, and to devote myself to the discovery of my forsaken Julie.

"I had a painful interview with M. Selby. I announced my intention to separate from him. I alleged as a reason my conscientious repugnance to live with a professed heretic—an enemy to our Holy Church. When M. Selby found that he could not shake my resolution, he lent himself to it with the forbearance and generosity which he had always exhibited. On our marriage he had settled on me five thousand pounds, to be absolutely mine in the event of his death. He now proposed to concede to me the interest on that capital during his life, and he undertook the charge of my step-daughter Isaura, and secured to her all the rest he had to leave; such landed property as he possessed in England passing to a distant relative.

"So we parted, not with hostility—tears were shed on both sides. I set out for Coblentz. Madame Surville had long since quitted that town, devoting some years to the round of various mineral spas in vain hope of cure. Not without some difficulty I traced her to her last residence in the neighborhood of Paris, but she was then no more—her death accelerated by the shock occasioned by the loss of her whole fortune, which she had been induced to place in one of the numerous fraudulent companies by which so many have been ruined. Julie, who was with her at the time of her death, had disappeared shortly after it—none could tell me whither; but from such hints as I could gather, the poor child, thus left destitute, had been betrayed into sinful courses.

"Probably I might yet by searching inquiry have found her out; you will say it was my duty at least to institute such inquiry. No doubt; I now remorsefully feel that it was. I did not think so at the time. The Italian priest had given me a few letters of introduction to French ladies with whom, when they had sojourned at Florence, he had made acquaintance. These ladies were very strict devotees, formal observers of those decorums by which devotion proclaims itself to the world. They had received me not only with kindness, but with marked respect. They chose to exalt into the noblest self-sacrifice the act of my leaving M.

Selby's house. Exaggerating the simple cause assigned to it in the priest's letter, they represented me as quitting a luxurious home and an idolizing husband rather than continue intimate intercourse with the enemy of my religion. This new sort of flattery intoxicated me with its fumes. I recoiled from the thought of shattering the pedestal to which I had found myself elevated. What if I should discover my daughter in one from the touch of whose robe these holy women would recoil as from the rags of a leper! No! it would be impossible for me to own her—impossible for me to give her the shelter of my roof. Nay, if discovered to hold any commune with such an outcast, no explanation, no excuse short of the actual truth, would avail with these austere judges of human error. And the actual truth would be yet deeper disgrace. I reasoned away my conscience. If I looked for example in the circles in which I had obtained reverential place, I could find no instance in which a girl who had fallen from virtue was not repudiated by her nearest relatives. Nay, when I thought of my own mother, had not her father refused to see her, to acknowledge her child, from no other offence than that of a *mesalliance* which wounded the family pride? That pride, alas! was in my blood—my sole inheritance from the family I sprang from.

"Thus it went on, till I had grave symptoms of a disease which rendered the duration of my life uncertain. My conscience awoke and tortured me. I resolved to take the veil. Vanity and pride again! My resolution was applauded by those whose opinion had so swayed my mind and my conduct. Before I retired into the convent from which I write, I made legal provision as to the bulk of the fortune which, by the death of M. Selby, has become absolutely at my disposal. One thousand pounds amply sufficed for dotation to the convent: the other four thousand pounds are given in trust to the eminent notary, M. Nadaud, Rue ——. On applying to him, you will find that the sum, with the accumulated interest, is bequeathed to you,—a tribute of gratitude for the assistance you afforded me in the time of your own need, and the kindness with which you acknowledged our relationship and commiserated my misfortunes.

"But oh, my uncle, find out—a man can do so with a facility not accorded to a woman—what has become of this poor Julie, and devote what you may deem right and just of the sum thus bequeathed to place her above want and temptation. In doing so, I know you will respect my name: I would not have it dishonor you, indeed.

"I have been employed in writing this long letter since the day I heard you were in Paris. It has exhausted the feeble remnants of my strength. It will be given to you before the interview I at once dread and long for, and in that interview you will not rebuke me. Will you, my kind uncle? No, you will only soothe and pity!

"Would that I were worthy to pray for others, that I might add, "May the Saints have you in their keeping, and lead you to faith in the Holy Church, which has power to absolve from sins those who repent as I do.'"

The letter dropped from Victor's hand. He took it up, smoothed it mechanically, and with a dim, abstracted, bewildered, pitiful wonder. Well might the Supérieure have hesitated to allow confessions, betraying a mind so little regulated by genuine religious faith, to pass into other hands. Evidently it was the paramount duty of rescuing from want or from sin the writer's forsaken child, that had overborne all other considerations in the mind of the Woman and the Priest she consulted.

Throughout that letter, what a strange perversion of understanding! what a half-unconscious confusion of wrong and right!—the duty marked out so obvious and so neglected; even the religious sentiment awakened by the conscience so dividing itself from the moral instinct! the dread of being thought less religious by obscure comparative strangers stronger than the moral obligation to discover and reclaim the child for whose errors, if she had erred, the mother who so selfishly forsook her was alone responsible! even at the last, at the approach of death, the love for a name she had never made a self-sacrifice to preserve unstained; and that concluding exhortation—that reliance on a repentance in which there was so qualified a reparation!

More would Victor de Mauléon have wondered had he known those points of similiarity in character, and on the nature of their final bequests, between Louise Duval and the husband she had deserted. By one of those singular coincidences which, if this work be judged by the ordinary rules presented to the ordinary novel-reader, a critic would not unjustly impute to defective invention in the author, the provision for this child, deprived of its natural parents during their lives, is left to the discretion and honor of trustees, accompanied on the part of the consecrated Louise and "the blameless King," with the injunction of respect to their worldly reputations—two parents so opposite in condition, in creed, in disposition, yet assimilating in that point of individual character in which it touches the wide vague circle of human opinion. For this, indeed, the excuses of Richard King are strong, inasmuch as the secrecy he sought was for the sake, not of his own memory, but that of her whom the world knew only as his honored wife. The conduct of Louise admits no such excuse; she dies as she had lived, an Egoist. But whatever the motives of the parents, what is the fate of the deserted child? What revenge does the worldly opinion, which the parents would escape for themselves, inflict on the in-

nocent infant to whom the bulk of their worldly possessions is to be clandestinely conveyed? Would all the gold of Ophir be compensation enough for her?

Slowly De Mauléon roused himself, and turned from the solitary place where he had been seated to a more crowded part of the ramparts. He passed a group of young *Mobiots*, with flowers wreathed round their gun-barrels. "If," said one of them gaily, "Paris wants bread, it never wants flowers." His companions laughed merrily, and burst out into a scurrile song in ridicule of St. Trochu. Just then an *obus* fell a few yards before the group The sound only for a moment drowned the song, but the splinters struck a man in a coarse, ragged dress, who had stopped to listen to the singers. At his sharp cry, two men hastened to his side: one was Victor de Mauléon; the other was a surgeon, who quitted another group of idlers—National Guards—attracted by the shriek that summoned his professional aid. The poor man was terribly wounded. The surgeon, glancing at De Mauléon, shrugged his shoulders, and muttered, "Past help!" The sufferer turned his haggard eyes on the Vicomte, and gasped out, "M. de Mauléon?"

"That is my name," answered Victor, surprised, and not immediately recognizing the sufferer.

"Hist, Jean Lebeau!—Look at me: you recollect me now, Marc le Roux, *concierge* to the Secret Council. Ay, I found out who you were long ago—followed you home from the last meeting you broke up. But I did not betray you, or you would have been murdered long since. Beware of the old set—beware of—of——" Here his voice broke off into shrill exclamations of pain. Curbing his last agonies with a powerful effort, he faltered forth—"You owe me a service—see to the little one at home—she is starving." The death-*râle* came on; in a few moments he was no more.

Victor gave orders for the removal of the corpse, and hurried away. The surgeon, who had changed countenance when he overheard the name in which the dying man had addressed De Mauléon, gazed silently after De Mauléon's retreating form, and then, also quitting the dead, rejoined the group he had quitted. Some of those who composed it acquired evil renown later in the war of the Communists, and came to disastrous ends: among that number the Pole Loubinsky and other members of the Secret Council. The Italian Raselli was there too, but, subtler than his French *confrères*, he divined the fate of the Communists, and glided from it—safe now in his native land, destined there, no doubt, to the funereal honors and lasting renown which Italy bestows on the dust of her sons who have advocated assassination out of love for the human race.

Amid this group, too, was a National Guard, strayed from his proper post, and stretched on the frozen ground; and, early though the hour, in the profound sleep of intoxication.

"So," said Loubinsky, "you have found your errand in vain, Citizen le Noy; another victim to the imbecility of our generals."

"And partly one of us," replied the *Médecin des Pauvres*. "You remember poor le Roux, who kept the old *baraque* where the Council of Ten used to meet? Yonder he lies?"

"Don't talk of the Council of Ten. What fools and dupes we were made by the *vieux gredin*, Jean Lebeau! How I wish I could meet him again!"

Gaspard le Noy smiled sarcastically. "So much the worse for you if you did. A muscular and a ruthless fellow is that Jean Lebeau!" Therewith he turned to the drunken sleeper and woke him up with a shake and a kick.

"Armand—Armand Monnier, I say, rise, rub your eyes! What if you are called to your post? What if you are shamed as a deserter and a coward?"

Armand turned, rose with an effort from the recumbent to the sitting posture, and stared dizzily in the face of the *Médecin des Pauvres*.

"I was dreaming that I had caught by the throat," said Armand, wildly, "the *aristo'* who shot my brother; and lo, there were two men, Victor de Mauléon and Jean Lebeau."

"Ah! there is something in dreams," said the surgeon. "Once in a thousand times a dream comes true."

CHAPTER V.

THE time now came when all provision of food or of fuel failed the modest household of

Isaura; and there was not only herself and the Venosta to feed and warm—there were the servants whom they brought from Italy, and had not the heart now to dismiss to the certainty of famine. True, one of the three, the man, had returned to his native land before the commencement of the siege; but the two women had remained. They supported themselves now as they could on the meagre rations accorded by the government. Still Isaura attended the ambulance to which she was attached. From the ladies associated with her she could readily have obtained ample supplies but they had no conception of her real state of destitution; and there was a false pride generally prevalent among the respectable classes, which Isaura shared, that concealed distress lest alms should be proffered.

The destitution of the household had been carefully concealed from the parents of Gustave Rameau until, one day, Madame Rameau, entering at the hour at which she generally, and her husband sometimes, came for a place by the fireside and a seat at the board, found on the one only ashes, on the other a ration of the black, nauseous compound which had become the substitute for bread.

Isaura was absent on her duties at the ambulance hospital,—purposely absent, for she shrank from the bitter task of making clear to the friends of her betrothed the impossibility of continuing the aid to their support which their son had neglected to contribute; and still more from the comment which she knew they would make on his conduct, in absenting himself so wholly of late, and in the time of such trial and pressure, both from them and from herself. Truly, she rejoiced at that absence so far as it affected herself. Every hour of the day she silently asked her conscience whether she were not now absolved from a promise won from her only by an assurance that she had power to influence for good the life that now voluntarily separated itself from her own. As she had never loved Gustave, so she felt no resentment at the indifference his conduct manifested. On the contrary, she hailed it as a sign that the annulment of their betrothal would be as welcome to him as to herself. And if so, she could restore to him the sort of compassionate friendship she had learned to cherish in the hour of his illness and repentance. She had resolved to seize the first opportunity he afforded to her of speaking to him with frank and truthful plainness. But, meanwhile, her gentle nature recoiled from the confession of her resolve to appeal to Gustave himself for the rupture of their engagement.

Thus the Venosta alone received Madame Rameau; and while that lady was still gazing round her with an emotion too deep for immediate utterance, her husband entered with an expression of face new to him—the look of a man who has been stung to anger, and who has braced his mind to some stern determination. This altered countenance of the good-tempered *bourgeois* was not, however, noticed by the two women. The Venosta did not even raise her eyes to it, as with humbled accents she said, "Pardon, dear Monsieur, pardon, Madame, our want of hospitality; it is not our hearts that fail. We kept our state from you as long as we could. Now it speaks for itself: '*la fame è un bratto festin.*'"

"Oh, Madame! and oh, my poor Isaura!" cried Madame Rameau, bursting into tears. "So we have been all this time a burden on you,—aided to bring such want on you! How can we ever be forgiven? And my son,—to leave us thus,—not even to tell us where to find him!"

"Do not degrade us, my wife," said M. Rameau, with unexpected dignity, "by a word to imply that we would stoop to sue for support to our ungrateful child. No, we will not starve. I am strong enough still to find food for you. I will apply for restoration to the National Guard. They have augmented the pay to married men; it is now nearly two francs and a half a-day to a *père de famille*, and on that pay we all can at least live. Courage, my wife! I will go at once for employment. Many men older than I am are at watch on the ramparts, and will march to the battle on the next sortie."

"It shall not be so," exclaimed Madame Rameau, vehemently, and winding her arm round her husband's neck. "I loved my son better than thee once—more the shame to me. Now, I would rather lose twenty such sons than peril thy life, my Jacques! Madame," she continued, turning to the Venosta, "thou wert wiser than I. Thou wert ever opposed to the union between thy friend and my son. I felt

sore with thee for it—a mother is so selfish when she puts herself in the place of her child. I thought that only through marriage with one so pure, so noble, so holy, Gustave could be saved from sin and evil. I am deceived. A man so heartless to his parents, so neglectful of his affianced, is not to be redeemed. I brought about this betrothal: tell Isaura that I release her from it. I have watched her closely since she was entrapped into it. I know how miserable the thought of it has made her, though, in her sublime devotion to her plighted word, she sought to conceal from me the real state of her heart. If the betrothal bring such sorrow, what would the union do! Tell her this from me. Come Jacques, come away!"

"Stay, Madame!" exclaimed the Venosta, her excitable nature much affected by this honest outburst of feeling. "It is true that I did oppose, so far as I could, my poor *Piccola's* engagement with M. Gustave. But I dare not do your bidding. Isaura would not listen to me. And let us be just; M. Gustave may be able satisfactorily to explain his seeming indifference and neglect. His health is always very delicate; perhaps he may be again dangerously ill. He serves in the National Guard; perhaps,"—she paused, but the mother conjectured the word left unsaid, and, clasping her hands, cried out in anguish, "Perhaps dead!—and we have wronged him! Oh, Jacques, Jacques! how shall we find out—how discover our boy? Who can tell us where to search? at the hospital—or in the cemeteries?" At the last word she dropped into a seat, and her whole frame shook with her sobs.

Jacques approached her tenderly, and kneeling by her side, said—

"No, *m'amie*, comfort thyself, if it be indeed comfort to learn that thy son is alive and well. For my part, I know not if I would not rather he had died in his innocent childhood. I have seen him—spoken to him. I know where he is to be found."

"You do, and concealed it from me? Oh, Jacques!"

"Listen to me, wife, and you too, Madame; for what I have to say should be made known to Mademoiselle Cicogna. Some time since, on the night of the famous sortie, when at my post on the ramparts, I was told that Gustave had joined himself to the most violent of the Red Republicans, and had uttered at the *Club de la Vengeance* sentiments, of which I will only say that I, his father and a Frenchman, hung my head with shame when they were repeated to me. I resolved to go to the club myself. I did. I heard him speak—heard him denounce Christianity as the instrument of tyrants."

"Ah!" cried the two women, with a simultaneous shudder.

"When the assembly broke up, I waylaid him at the door. I spoke to him seriously. I told him what anguish such announcement of blasphemous opinions would inflict on his pious mother. I told him I should deem it my duty to inform Mademoiselle Cicogna, and warn her against the union on which he had told us his heart was bent. He appeared sincerely moved by what I said; implored me to keep silence towards his mother and his betrothed; and promised, on that condition, to relinquish at once what he called 'his career as an orator,' and appear no more at such execrable clubs. On this understanding I held my tongue. Why, with such other causes of grief and suffering, should I tell thee, poor wife, of a sin that I hoped thy son had repented and would not repeat? And Gustave kept his word. He has never, so far as I know, attended, at least spoken, at the Red clubs since that evening."

"Thank heaven so far," murmured Madame Rameau.

"So far, yes; but hear more. A little time after I thus met him he changed his lodging, and did not confide to us his new address, giving as a reason to us that he wished to avoid all clue to his discovery by that pertinacious Mademoiselle Julie."

Rameau had here sunk his voice into a whisper, intended only for his wife, but the ear of the Venosta was fine enough to catch the sound, and she repeated, "Mademoiselle Julie! Santa Maria! who is she?"

"Oh!" said M. Rameau, with a shrug of his shoulders, and with true Parisian *sang froid* as to such matters of morality, "a trifle not worth considering. Of course a good-looking *garçon* like Gustave must have his little affairs of the heart before he settles for life. Unluckily, amongst those of Gustave was one with a violent-tempered girl who persecuted him when he left her, and he naturally wished

to avoid all chance of a silly scandal, if only out of respect to the dignity of his *fiancée*. But I found that was not the true motive, or at least the only one, for concealment. Prepare yourself, my poor wife. Thou hast heard of these terrible journals which the *déchéance* has let loose upon us. Our unhappy boy is the principal writer of one of the worst of them, under the name of 'Diderot le Jeune.'"

"What!" cried the Venosta. "That monster! The good Abbé Vertpré was telling us of the writings with that name attached to them. The Abbé himself is denounced by name as one of those meddling priests who are to be constrained to serve as soldiers or pointed out to the vengeance of the *canaille*. Isaura's *fiancée* a blasphemer!"

"Hush, hush!" said Madame Rameau rising, very pale but self-collected. "How do you know this, Jacques?"

"From the lips of Gustave himself. I heard first of it yesterday from one of the young reprobates with whom he used to be familiar, and who even complimented me on the rising fame of my son, and praised the eloquence of his article that day. But I would not believe him. I bought the journal—here it is; saw the name and address of the printer—went this morning to the office—was there told that 'Diderot le Jeune' was within revising the press—stationed myself by the street door, and when Gustave came out I seized his arm, and asked him to say Yes or No if he was the author of this infamous article,—this, which I now hold in my hand. He owned the authorship with pride; talked wildly of the great man he was—of the great things he was to do; said that, in hitherto concealing his true name, he had done all he could to defer to the bigoted prejudices of his parents and his *fiancée;* and that if genius like fire, would find its way out, he could not help it; that a time was rapidly coming when his opinions would be uppermost; that since October the Communists were gaining ascendancy, and only waited the end of the siege to put down the present government, and with all hypocrisies and shams, religious or social. My wife, he was rude to me, insulting; but he had been drinking—that made him incautious and he continued to walk by my side towards his own lodging, on reaching which he ironically invited me to enter, saying, 'I should meet there men who would soon argue me out of my obsolete notions.' You may go to him, wife, now, if you please. I will not, nor will I take from him a crust of bread. I came hither determined to tell the young lady all this, if I found her at home. I should be a dishonored man if I suffered her to be cheated into misery. There Madame Venosto, there! Take that journal, show it to Mademoiselle; and report to her all I have said."

M. Rameau, habitually the mildest of men, had, in talking, worked himself up into positive fury.

His wife, calmer but more deeply affected, made a piteous sign to the Venosto not to say more, and without other salutation or adieu took her husband's arm, and led him from the house.

CHAPTER VI.

Obtaining from her husband Gustave's address, Madame Rameau hastened to her son's apartment alone through the darkling streets. The house in which he lodged was in a different quarter from that in which Isaura had visited him. Then, the street selected was still in the centre of the *beau monde*—now, it was within the precincts of that section of the many-faced capital in which the *beau monde* was held in detestation or scorn; still the house had certain pretensions, boasting a courtyard and a porter's lodge. Madame Rameau, instructed to mount *au second*, found the door ajar, and, entering, perceived on the table of the little *salon* the remains of a feast which, however untempting it might have been in happier times, contrasted strongly the meagre fare of which Gustave's parents had deemed themseles fortunate to partake at the board of his betrothed; remnants of those viands which offered to the inquisitive epicure an experiment in food much too costly for the popular stomach—dainty morsels of elephant, hippopotamus, and wolf, interspersed with half-emptied bottles of varied and high-priced wines.

Passing these evidences of unseasonable extravagance with a mute sentiment of anger and disgust, Madame Rameau penetrated into a small cabinet, the door of which was also ajar, and saw her son stretched on his bed half dressed, breathing heavily in the sleep which

follows intoxication. She did not attempt to disturb him. She placed herself quietly by his side, gazing mournfully on the face which she had once so proudly contemplated, now haggard and faded,—still strangely beautiful, though it was the beauty of ruin.

From time to time he stirred uneasily, and muttered broken words, in which fragments of his own delicately-worded verse were incoherently mixed up with ribald slang, addressed to imaginary companions. In his dreams he was evidently living over again his late revel, with episodical diversions into the poet-world, of which he was rather a vagrant nomad than a settled cultivator. Then she would silently bathe his feverish temples with the perfumed water she found on his dressing-table. And so she watched till, in the middle of the night, he woke up, and recovered the possession of his reason with a quickness that surprised Madame Rameau. He was, indeed, one of those men in whom excess of drink, when slept off, is succeeded by extreme mildness, the effect of nervous exhaustion, and by a dejected repentance, which, to his mother, seemed a propitious lucidity of the moral sense.

Certainly on seeing her he threw himself on her breast, and began to shed tears. Madame Rameau had not the heart to reproach him sternly. But by gentle degrees she made him comprehend the pain he had given to his father, and the destitution in which he had deserted his parents and his affianced. In his present mood Gustave was deeply affected by these representations. He excused himself feebly by dwelling on the excitement of the times, the preoccupation of his mind, the example of his companions; but with his excuses he mingled passionate expressions of remorse, and before daybreak mother and son were completely reconciled. Then he fell into a tranquil sleep; and Madame Rameau, quite worn out, slept also in the chair beside him, her arm around his neck. He awoke before she did at a late hour in the morning, and stealing from her arm, went to his *secrétaire*, and took forth what money he found there, half of which he poured into her lap, kissing her till she awoke.

"Mother," he said, "henceforth I will work for thee and my father. Take this trifle now; the rest I reserve for Isaura."

"Joy! I have found my boy again. But Isaura, I fear that she will not take thy money, and all thought of her must also be abandoned."

Gustave had already turned to his looking-glass, and was arranging with care his dark ringlets: his personal vanity—his remorse appeased by this pecuniary oblation—had revived.

"No," he said gaily, "I don't think I shall abandon her; and it is not likely, when she sees and hears me, that she can wish to abandon me! Now, let us breakfast, and then I will go at once to her."

In the meanwhile, Isaura, on her return to her apartment at the wintry nightfall, found a cart stationed at the door, and the Venosta on the threshold, superintending the removal of various articles of furniture—indeed, all such articles as were not absolutely required.

"Oh, *Piccola!*" she said, with an attempt at cheerfulness, "I did not expect thee back so soon. Hush! I have made a famous bargain. I have found a broker to buy these things which we don't want just at present, and can replace by new and prettier things when the siege is over and we get our money. The broker pays down on the nail, and thou wilt not go to bed without supper. There are no ills which are not more supportable after food."

Isaura smiled faintly, kissed the Venosta's cheek, and ascended with weary steps to the sitting-room. There she seated herself quietly, looking with abstracted eyes round the bare dismantled space by the light of the single candle.

When the Venosta re-entered, she was followed by the servants, bringing in a daintier meal than they had known for days—a genuine rabbit, potatoes, *marrons glacés*, a bottle of wine, and a pannier of wood. The fire was soon lighted, the Venosta plying the bellows. It was not till this banquet, of which Isaura, faint as she was, scarcely partook, had been remitted to the two Italian women-servants, and another log been thrown on the hearth, that the Venosta opened the subject which was pressing on her heart. She did this with a joyous smile, taking both Isaura's hands in her own, and stroking them fondly.

"My child, I have such good news for thee! Thou hast escaped—thou art free!" And then she related all that M. Rameau had

said, and finished by producing the copy of Gustave's unhallowed journal.

When she had read the latter, which she did with compressed lips and varying color, the girl fell on her knees—not to thank heaven that she would now escape a union from which her soul recoiled—not that she was indeed free,—but to pray with tears rolling down her cheeks, that God would yet save to Himself, and to good ends, the soul that she had failed to bring to Him. All previous irritation against Gustave had gone: all had melted into an ineffable compassion.

CHAPTER VII.

When, a little before noon, Gustave was admitted by the serveant into Isaura's *salon*, its desolate condition, stripped of all its pretty feminine elegancies, struck him with a sense of discomfort to himself which superseded any more remorseful sentiment. The day was intensely cold: the single log on the hearth did not burn; there were only two or three chairs in the room; even the carpet, which had been of gaily colored Aubusson, was gone. His teeth chattered; and he only replied by a dreary nod to the servant, who informed him that Madame Venosta was gone out, and Mademoiselle had not yet quitted her own room.

If there be a thing which a true Parisian of Rameau's stamp associates with love of woman, it is a certain sort of elegant surroundings,—a pretty *boudior*, a cheery hearth, an easy *fauteuil*. In the absence of such attributes, "*fugit retro Venus*." If the Englishman invented the word comfort, it is the Parisian who most thoroughly comprehends the thing. And he resents the loss of it in any house where he has been accustomed to look for it, as a personal wrong to his feelings.

Left for some minutes alone, Gustave occupied himself with kindling the log, and muttering, "*Par tous les diables, quel chien de rhume je vais attraper!*" He turned as he heard the rustle of a robe and a light slow step. Isaura stood before him. Her aspect startled him. He had come prepared to expect grave displeasure and a frigid reception. But the expression of Isaura's face was more kindly, more gentle, more tender, than he had seen it since the day she had accepted his suit.

Knowing from his mother what his father had said to his prejudice, he thought within himself, "After all, the poor girl loves me better than I thought. She is sensible and enlightened; she cannot pretend to dictate an opinion to a man like me."

He approached with a complacent self-assured mien, and took her hand, which she yielded to him quietly, leading her to one of the few remaining chairs, and seating himself beside her.

"Dear Isaura," he said, talking rapidly all the while he performed this ceremony, "I need not assure you of my utter ignorance of the state to which the imbecility of our Government, and the cowardice, or rather the treachery, of our generals, has reduced you. I only heard of it late last night from my mother. I hasten to claim my right to share with you the humble resources which I have saved by the intellectual labors that have absorbed all such moments as my military drudgeries left to the talents which, even at such a moment, paralyzing minds less energetic, have sustained me;"—and therewith he poured several pieces of gold and silver on the table beside her chair.

"Gustave," then said Isaura, "I am well pleased that you thus prove that I was not mistaken when I thought and said that, despite all appearances, all errors, your heart was good. Oh, do but follow its true impulses, and——"

"Its impulses lead me ever to thy feet," interrupted Gustave, with a fervor which sounded somewhat theatrical and hollow.

The girl smiled, not bitterly, not mockingly; but Gustave did not like the smile.

"Poor Gustave," she said, with a melancholy pathos in her soft voice, "do you not understand that the time has come when such commonplace compliments ill-suit our altered positions to each other? Nay, listen to me patiently; and let not my words in this last interview pain you to recall. If either of us be to blame in the engagement hastily contracted, it is I Gustave, when you, exaggerating in your imagination the nature of your sentiments for me, said with such earnestness that on my consent to our union depended your

health, your life, your career; that if I withheld that consent you were lost, and in despair would seek distraction from thought in all from which your friends, your mother, the duties imposed upon genius for the good of man to the ends of God, should withhold and save you —when you said all this, and I believed it, I felt as if Heaven commanded me not to desert the soul which appealed to me in the crisis of its struggle and peril. Gustave, I repent; I was to blame."

"How to blame?"

"I overrated my power over your heart: I overrated still more, perhaps, my power over my own."

"Ah, your own! I understand now You did not love me?"

"I never said that I loved you in the sense in which you use the word. I told you that the love which you have described in your verse, and which," she added, falteringly, with heightened color and with hands tightly clasped, "I have conceived possible in my dreams, it was not mine to give. You declared you were satisfied with such affection as I could bestow. Hush! let me go on. You said that affection would increase, would become love, in proportion as I knew you more. It has not done so. Nay, it passed away, even before in this time of trial and grief, I became aware how different from the love you professed was the neglect which needs no excuse, for it did not pain me."

"You are cruel indeed, Mademoiselle."

"No, indeed, I am kind. I wish you to feel no pang at our parting. Truly, I had resolved, when the siege terminated, and the time to speak frankly of our engagement came, to tell you that I shrank from the thought of a union between us; and that it was for the happiness of both that our promises should be mutually cancelled. The moment has come sooner than I thought. Even had I loved you, Gustave, as deeply as—as well as the beings of Romance love, I would not dare to wed one who calls upon mortals to deny God, demolish His altars, treat His worship as a crime. No; I would sooner die of a broken heart, that I might the sooner be one of those souls privileged to pray the Divine intercessor for merciful light on those beloved and left dark on earth."

"Isaura!" exclaimed Gustave, his mobile temperament impressed, not by the words of Isaura, but by the passionate earnestness with which they were uttered, and by the exquisite spiritual beauty which her face took from the combined sweetness and fervor of its devout expression,—"Isaura, I merit your censure, your sentence of condemnation; but do not ask me to give back your plighted troth. I have not the strength to do so. More than ever, more than when first pledged to me, I need the aid, the companionship, of my guardian angel. You were that to me once; abandon me not now. In these terrible times of revolution, excitable natures catch madness from each other. A writer in the heat of his passion says much that he does not mean to be literally taken, which in cooler moments he repents and retracts. Consider, too, the pressure of want, of hunger. It is the opinions that you so condemn which alone at this moment supply bread to the writer. But say you will yet pardon me,—yet give me trial if I offend no more—if I withdraw my aid to any attacks on your views, your religion—if I say, 'Thy God shall be my God, and thy people shall be my people.'"

"Alas!" said Isaura, softly, "ask thyself if those be words which I can believe again. Hush!" she continued, checking his answer with a more kindling countenance and more impassioned voice. "Are they, after all, the words that man should address to woman? Is it on the strength of Woman that Man should rely? Is to her that he should say, 'Dictate my opinions on all that belongs to the Mind of man; change the doctrines that I have thoughtfully formed and honestly advocate; teach me how to act on earth, clear all my doubts as to my hopes of heaven'? No, Gustave; in this task man never should repose on woman. Thou art honest at this moment, my poor friend; but could I believe thee to-day, thou wouldst laugh to-morrow at what woman can be made to believe."

Stung to the quick by the truth of Isaura's accusation, Gustave exclaimed with vehemence —"All that thou sayest is false, and thou knowest it. The influence of woman on man for good or for evil defies reasoning. It does mould his deeds on earth; it does either make or mar all that future which lies between his life and his gravestone, and of whatsoever may lie beyond the grave. Give me up now, and

thou art responsible for me, for all I do, it may be against all that thou deemest holy. Keep thy troth yet awhile, and test me. If I come to thee showing how I could have injured, and how for thy dear-sake I have spared, nay, aided, all that thou dost believe and reverence, then wilt thou dare to say, Go thy ways alone —I forsake thee?' "

Isaura turned aside her face, but she held out her hand—it was as cold as death. He knew that she had so far yielded, and his vanity exulted: he smiled in secret triumph as he pressed his kiss on that icy hand and was gone.

"This is duty—it must be duty," said Isaura to herself. "But where is the buoyant delight that belongs to a duty achieved?—where, oh where?" And then she stole with drooping head and heavy step into her own room, fell on her knees and prayed.

CHAPTER VIII.

In vain persons, be they male or female, there is a complacent self-satisfaction in any momentary personal success, however little that success may conduce to—nay, however much it may militate against—the objects to which their vanity itself devotes its more permament desires. A vain woman may be very anxious to win A——, the magnificent, as a partner for life, and yet feel a certain triumph when a glance of her eye has made an evening's conquest of the pitiful B——, although by that achievement she incurs the imminent hazard of losing A—— altogether. So, when Gustave Rameau quitted Isaura, his first feeling was that of triumph. His eloquence had subdued her will: she had not finally discarded him. But as he wandered abstractedly in the biting air, his self-complacency was succeeded by mortification and discontent.

He felt that he had committed himself to promises which he was by no means prepared to keep. True, the promises were vague in words; but in substance they were perfectly clear—"to spare, nay, to aid all that Isaura esteemed and reverenced." How was this possible to him? How could he suddenly change the whole character of his writings?—how become the whole defender of marriage and property, of church and religion?—how proclaim himself so utter an apostate? If he did, how become a leader of the fresh revolution? how escape being its victim? Cease to write altogether? But then how live? His pen was his sole subsistence, save 30 sous a-day as a National Guard—30 sous a-day to him who, in order to be Sybarite in tastes, was Spartan in doctrine. Nothing better just at that moment than Spartan doctrine—"Live on black broth and fight the enemy." And the journalists in vogue so thrived upon that patriotic sentiment, that they were the last persons compelled to drink the black broth or to fight the enemy.

"Those women are such idiots when they meddle in politics," grumbled between his teeth the enthusiastic advocate of Woman's Rights on all matters of love. "And," he continued, soliloquizing, "it is not as if the girl had any large or decent *dot;* it is not as if she said, 'In return for the sacrifice of your popularity, your prospects, your opinions, I give you not only a devoted heart, but an excellent table and a capital fire and plenty of pocket-money.' *Sacre bleu!* when I think of that frozen *salon*, and possibly the leg of a mouse for dinner, and a virtuous homily by way of grace, the prospect is not alluring; and the girl herself is not so pretty as she was—grown very thin. *Sur mon âme*, I think she asks too much—far more than she is worth. No, no; I had better have accepted her dismissal. *Elle n'est pas digne de moi.*"

Just as he arrived at that conclusion, Gustave Rameau felt the touch of a light, a soft, a warm, yet a firm hand, on his arm. He turned, and beheld the face of the woman whom, through so many dreary weeks, he had sought to shun—the face of Julie Caumartin. Julie was not, as Savarin had seen her, looking pinched and wan, with faded robes, nor, as when met in the *café* by Lemercier, in the faded robes of a theatre. Julie never looked more beautiful, more radiant, than she did now; and there was a wonderful heartfelt fondness in her voice when she cried, "*Mon homme! mon homme! seul homme au monde de mon cœur, Gustave, chéri, adoré!* I have found thee—at last—at last!"

Gustave gazed upon her, stupefied. Involuntarily his eye glanced from the freshness of bloom in her face, which the intense cold of the atmosphere only seemed to heighten into

purer health, to her dress, which was new and handsome—black—he did not know that it was mourning—the cloak trimmed with costly sables. Certainly, it was no mendicant for alms who thus reminded the shivering Adonis of the claims of a pristine Venus. He stammered out her name—"Julie!"—and then he stopped.

"*Oui, ta Julie? Petit ingrat!* how I have sought for thee! how I have hungered for the sight of thee! That monster Savarin! he would not give me any news of thee. That is ages ago. But at least Frederic Lemercier, whom I saw since, promised to remind thee that I lived still. He did not do so, or I should have seen thee—*n'est ce pas?*"

"Certainly, certainly—only—*chère amie*—you know that—that—as I before announced to thee, I—I—was engaged in marriage—and—and——"

"But are you married?"

"No, no. Hark! Take care—is not that the hiss of an *obus?*"

"What then? Let it come! Would it might slay us both while my hand is in thine!"

"Ah!" muttered Gustave, inwardly, "what a difference! This is love! No preaching here! *Elle est plus digne de moi que l'autre.*"

"No," he said, aloud, "I am not married. Marriage is at best a pitiful ceremony. But if you wished for news of me, surely you must have heard of my effect as an orator not despised in the Salle Favre. Since, I have withdrawn from that arena. But as a journalist I flatter myself that I have had a *beau succès.*"

"Doubtless, doubtless, my Gustave, my Poet! Wherever thou art, thou must be first among men. But, alas! it is my fault—my misfortune. I have not been in the midst of a world that perhaps rings of thy name."

"Not my name. Prudence compelled me to conceal that. Still, Genius pierces under any name. You might have discovered me under my *nom de plume.*"

"Pardon me—I was always *bête.* But, oh! for so many weeks I was so poor—so destitute. I could go nowhere, except—don't be ashamed of me—except——"

"Yes? Go on."

"Except where I could get some money. At first to dance—you remember my *bolero.* Then I got a better engagement. Do you not remember that you taught me to recite verses? Had it been for myself alone, I might have been contented to starve. Without thee, what was life? But thou wilt recollect Madeleine, the old *bonne* who lived with me. Well, she had attended and cherished me since I was so high—lived with my mother. Mother! no; it seems that Madame Surville was not my mother after all. But, of course, I could not let my old Madeleine starve; and therefore, with a heart heavy as lead, I danced and declaimed. My heart was not so heavy when I recited thy songs."

"My songs! *Pauvre ange!*" exclaimed the Poet.

"And then, too, I thought, 'Ah! this dreadful siege! He, too, may be poor—he may know want and hunger;' and so all I could save from Madeleine I put into a box for thee, in case thou shouldst come back to me some day. *Mon homme*, how could I go to the Salle Favre? How could I read journals, Gustave? But thou art not married, Gustave? *Parole d'honneur?*"

"*Parole d'honneur!* What does that matter?"

"Everything! Ah! I am not so *méchante*, so *mauvaise tête*, as I was some months ago. If thou wert married, I should say, 'Blessed and sacred be thy wife! Forget me.' But as it is, one word more. Dost thou love the young lady, whoever she be? or does she love thee so well that it would be sin in thee to talk trifles to Julie? Speak as honestly as if thou wert not a poet."

"Honestly, she never said she loved me. I never thought she did. But, you see, I was very ill, and my parents and friends and my physician said that it was right for me to arrange my life, and marry, and so forth. And the girl had money, and was a good match. In short, the thing was settled. But oh, Julie! she never learned my songs by heart! She did not love as thou didst, and still dost. And—ah! well—now that we meet again—now that I look in thy face—now that I hear thy voice—— No, I do not love her as I loved, and might yet love, thee. But—but——"

"Well, but? oh, I guess. Thou seest me well dressed, no longer dancing and declaiming at *cafés;* and thou thinkest that Julie has disgraced herself? she is unfaithful?"

Gustave had not anticipated that frankness,

nor was the idea which it expressed uppermost in his mind when he said, "but, but——" There were many *buts*, all very confused, struggling through his mind as he spoke. However, he answered as a Parisian sceptic, not ill bred, naturally would answer—

"My dear friend, my dear child" (the Parisian is very fond of the word child or *enfant* in addressing a woman), "I have never seen thee so beautiful as thou art now; and when thou tellest me that thou art no longer poor, and the proof of what thou sayest is visible in the furs—which, alas! I cannot give thee—what am I to think?"

"Oh, *mon homme*, *mon homme!* thou art very *spirituel*, and that is why I loved thee. I am very *bête*, and that is excuse enough for thee if thou couldst not love me. But canst thou look me in the face and not know that my eyes could not meet thine as they do, if I had been faithless to thee even in a thought, when I so boldly touched thine arm? *Viens chez moi*, come and let me explain all. Only—only let me repeat, if another has rights over thee which forbid thee to come, say so kindly, and I will never trouble thee again."

Gustave had been hitherto walking slowly by the side of Julie, amidst the distant boom of the besieger's cannon, while the short day began to close; and along the dreary boulevards sauntered idlers turning to look at the young, beautiful, well-dressed woman who seemed in such contrast to the capital whose former luxuries the "Ondine" of imperial Paris represented. He now offered his arm to Julie; and, quickening his pace, said, "There is no reason why I should refuse to attend thee home, and listen to the explanations thou dost generously condescend to volunteer."

CHAPTER IX.

"Ah, indeed! what a difference! what a difference!" said Gustave to himself when he entered Julie's apartment. In her palmier days, when he had first made her acquaintance, the apartment no doubt had been infinitely more splendid, more abundant in silks and fringes and flowers and nicknacks; but never had it seemed so cheery and comfortable and homelike as now. What a contrast to Isaura's dismantled chilly *salon!* She drew him towards the hearth, on which, blazing though it was, she piled fresh billets, seated him in the easiest of easy-chairs, knelt beside him, and chafed his numbed hands in hers; and as her bright eyes fixed tenderly on his, she looked so young and so innocent! You would not then have called her the "Ondine of Paris."

But when, a little while after, revived by the genial warmth and moved by the charm of her beauty, Gustave passed his arm round her neck and sought to draw her on his lap, she slid from his embrace, shaking her head gently, and seated herself, with a pretty air of ceremonious decorum, at a little distance.

Gustave looked at her amazed.

"*Causons*," said she gravely: "thou wouldst know why I am so well dressed, so comfortably lodged, and I am longing to explain to thee all. Some days ago I had just finished my performance at the Café——, and was putting on my shawl, when a tall Monsieur, *fort bel homme*, with the air of a *grand seigneur*, entered the *café*, and approaching me politely, said, 'I think I have the honor to address Mademoiselle Julie Caumartin?' 'That is my name,' I said, surprised; and, looking at him more intently, I recognized his face. He had come into the *café* a few days before with thine old acquaintance Frederic Lemercier, and stood by when I asked Frederic to give me news of thee. 'Madameoiselle,' he continued, with a serious, melancholy smile, 'I shall startle you when I say that I am appointed to act as your guardian by the last request of your mother.' 'Of Madame Surville?' 'Madame Surville adopted you, but was not your mother. We cannot talk at ease here. Allow me to request that you will accompany me to Monsieur N——, the *avoué*. It is not very far from this: and by the way I will tell you some news that may sadden, and some news that may rejoice.'

"There was an earnestness in the voice and look of this Monsieur that impressed me. He did not offer me his arm; but I walked by his side in the direction he chose. As we walked he told me in very few words that my mother had been separated from her husband, and for certain family reasons had found it so difficult to rear and provide for me herself, that she had accepted the offer of Madame Surville to adopt me as her own child. While he spoke, there came dimly back to me the

remembrance of a lady who had taken me from my first home, when I had been, as I understood, at nurse, and left me with poor dear Madame Surville, saying, 'This is henceforth your mamma.' I never again saw that lady. It seems that many years afterwards my true mother desired to regain me. Madame Surville was then dead. She failed to trace me out, owing, alas! to my own faults and change of name. She then entered a nunnery, but before doing so, assigned a sum of 100,000 francs to this gentleman, who was distantly connected with her, with full power to him to take it to himself, or give it to my use should he discover me, at his discretion. 'I ask you,' continued the Monsieur, 'to go with me to Mons. N——'s, because the sum is still in his hands. He will confirm my statement. All that I have now to say is this: If you accept my guardianship, if you obey implicitly my advice, I shall consider the interest of this sum, which has accumulated since deposited with M. N—— due to you; and the capital will be your *dot* on marriage, if the marriage be with my consent.'"

Gustave had listened very attentively, and without interruption, until now; when he looked up, and said with his customary sneer, "Did your Monsieur, *fort bel homme*, you say, inform you of the value of the advice, rather of the commands, you were implicity to obey?"

"Yes," answered Julie, "not then, but later. Let me go on. We arrived at M. N——'s, an elderly grave man. He said that all he knew was that he held the money in trust for the Monsieur with me, to be given to him, with the accumulations of interest, on the death of the lady who had deposited it. If that Monsieur had instructions how to dispose of the money, they were not known to him. All he had to do was to transfer it absolutely to him on the proper certificate of the lady's death. So you see, Gustave, that the Monsieur could have kept all from me if he had liked."

"Your Monsieur is very generous. Perhaps you will now tell me his name."

"No; he forbids me to do it yet."

"And he took this apartment for you, and gave you the money to buy that smart dress and these furs. Bah! *mon enfant*, why try to deceive me? Do I not know my Paris! A *fort bel homme* does not make himself guardian to a *fort belle fille* so young and fair as Mademoiselle Julie Caumartin without certain considerations which shall be nameless, like himself."

Julie's eyes flashed. "Ah, Gustave! ah, Monsieur!" she said, half angrily, half plaintively, "I see that my guardian knew you better than I did. Never mind: I will not reproach. Thou hast the right to despise me."

"Pardon! I did not mean to offend thee," said Gustave, somewhat disconcerted. "But own that thy story is strange; and this guardian, who knows me better than thou—does he know me at all? Didst thou speak to him of me?"

"How could I help it? He says that this terrible war, in which he takes an active part, makes his life uncertain from day to day. He wished to complete the trust bequeathed to him by seeing me safe in the love of some worthy man who"—she paused for a moment with an expression of compressed anguish, and then hurried on—"who would recognize what was good in me,—would never reproach me for—for—the past. I then said that my heart was thine: I could never marry any one but thee."

"Marry me," faltered Gustave—"marry!"

"And," continued the girl, not heeding his interruption, "he said thou wert not the husband he would choose for me: that thou wert not—no, I cannot wound thee by repeating what he said unkindly, unjustly. He bade me think of thee no more. I said again, that is impossible."

"But," resumed Rameau, with an affected laugh, "why think of anything so formidable as marriage? Thou lovest me, and——" He approached again, seeking to embrace her. She recoiled. "No, Gustave, no. I have sworn—sworn solemnly by the memory of my lost mother—that I will never sin again. I will never be to thee other than thy friend—or thy wife."

Before Gustave could reply to these words, which took him wholly by surprise, there was a ring at the outer door, and the old *bonne* ushered in Victor de Mauléon. He halted at the threshold, and his brow contracted.

"So you have already broken faith with me, Mademoiselle?"

"No, Monsieur, I have not broken faith," cried Julie, passionately. "I told you that I would not seek to find out Monsieur Rameau.

I did not seek, but I met him unexpectedly. I owed to him an explanation. I invited him here to give that explanation. Without it, what would he have thought of me? Now he may go, and I will never admit him again without your sanction."

The Vicomte turned his stern look upon Gustave, who, though, as we know, not wanting in personal courage, felt cowed by his false position; and his eye fell, quailed before De Mauléon's gaze.

"Leave us for a few minutes alone, Mademoiselle," said the Vicomte. "Nay, Julie," he added, in softened tones, "fear nothing. I, too, owe explanation—friendly explanation—to M. Rameau."

With his habitual courtesy towards women, he extended his hand to Julie, and led her from the room. Then, closing the door, he seated himself, and made a sign to Gustave to do the same.

"Monsieur," said De Mauléon, "excuse me if I detain you. A very few words will suffice for our present interview. I take it for granted that Mademoiselle has told you that she is no child of Madame Surville's: that her own mother bequeathed her to my protection and guardianship with a modest fortune which is at my disposal to give or withhold. The little I have seen already of Mademoiselle impresses me with sincere interest in her fate. I look with compassion on what she may have been in the past; I anticipate with hope what she may be in the future. I do not ask you to see her in either with my eyes. I say frankly that it is my intention, and I may add my resolve, that the ward thus left to my charge shall be henceforth safe from the temptations that have seduced her poverty, her inexperience, her vanity if you will, but have not yet corrupted her heart. *Bref*, I must request you to give me your word of honor that you will hold no further communication with her. I can allow no sinister influence to stand between her fate and honor."

"You speak well and nobly, M. le Vicomte," said Rameau, "and I give the promise you exact." He added, feelingly, "It is true her heart has never been corrupted. That is good, affectionate, unselfish as a child's. *J'ai l'honneur de vous saluer*, M. le Vicomte."

He bowed with a dignity unusual to him, and tears were in his eyes as he passed by De Mauléon and gained the anteroom. There a side-door suddenly opened, and Julie's face, anxious, eager, looked forth.

Gustave paused: "Adieu, Mademoiselle! Though we may never meet again,—though our fates divide us,—believe me that I shall ever cherish your memory—and——"

The girl interrupted him, impulsively seizing his arm, and looking him in the face with a wild fixed stare.

"Hush! dost thou mean to say that we are parted,—parted for ever?"

"Alas!" said Gustave, "what option is before us? Your guardian rightly forbids my visits; and even were I free to offer you my hand, you yourself say that I am not a suitor he would approve."

Julie turned her eyes towards De Mauléon, who, following Gustave into the anteroom, stood silent and impassive, leaning against the wall.

He now understood and replied to the pathetic appeal in the girl's eyes.

"My young ward," he said, "M. Rameau expresses himself with propriety and truth. Suffer him to depart. He belongs to the former life; reconcile yourself to the new."

He advanced to take her hand, making a sign to Gustave to depart. But as he approached Julie, she uttered a weak piteous wail, and fell at his feet senseless. De Mauléon raised and carried her into her room, where he left her to the care of the old *bonne*. On re-entering the ante-room, he found Gustave still lingering by the outer door.

"You will pardon me, Monsieur," he said to the Vicomte, "but in fact I feel so uneasy, so unhappy. Has she——? You see, you see that there is danger to her health, perhaps to her reason, in so abrupt a separation, so cruel a rupture between us. Let me call again, or I may not have strength to keep my promise."

De Mauléon remained a few minutes musing. Then he said in a whisper, "Come back into the *salon*. Let us talk frankly."

CHAPTER X.

"M. RAMEAU," said De Mauléon, when the two men had reseated themselves in the *salon*,

"I will honestly say that my desire is to rid myself as soon as I can of the trust of guardian to this young lady. Playing as I do with fortune, my only stake against her favors is my life. I feel as if it were my duty to see that Mademoiselle is not left alone and friendless in the world at my decease. I have in my mind for her a husband that I think in every way suitable: a handsome and brave young fellow in my battalion, of respectable birth, without any living relations to consult as to his choice. I have reason to believe that if Julie married him, she need never fear a reproach as to her antecedents. Her *dot* would suffice to enable him to realize his own wish of a country town in Normandy. And in that station, Paris and its temptations would soon pass from the poor child's thoughts, as an evil dream. But I cannot dispose of her hand without her own consent; and if she is to be reasoned out of her fancy for you, I have no time to devote to the task. I come to the point. You are not the man I would choose for her husband. But, evidently, you are the man she would choose. Are you disposed to marry her? You hesitate, very naturally; I have no right to demand an immediate answer to a question so serious. Perhaps you will think over it, and let me know in a day or two? I take it for granted that if you were, as I heard, engaged before the siege to marry the Signora Cicogna, that engagement is annulled?"

"Why take it for granted?" asked Gustave, perplexed.

"Simply because I find you here. Nay, spare explanations and excuses. I quite understand that you were invited to come. But a man solemnly betrothed to a *demoiselle* like the Signora Cicogna, in a time of such dire calamity and peril, could scarcely allow himself to be tempted to accept the invitation of one so beautiful, and so warmly attached to him, as is Mademoiselle Julie; and on witnessing the passionate strength of that attachment, say that he cannot keep a promise not to repeat his visits. But if I mistake, and you are still betrothed to the Signorina, of course all discussion is at an end."

Gustave hung his head in some shame, and in much bewildered doubt.

The practised observer of men's characters, and of shifting phases of mind, glanced at the poor poet's perturbed countenance with a half-smile of disdain.

"It is for you to judge how far the very love to you so ingenuously evinced by my ward—how far the reasons against marriage with one whose antecedents expose her to reproach—should influence one of your advanced opinions upon social ties. Such reasons do not appear to have with artists the same weight they have with the *bourgeoisie*. I have but to add that the husband of Julie will receive with her hand a *dot* of nearly 120,000 francs; and I have reason to believe that that fortune will be increased—how much, I cannot guess—when the cessation of the siege will allow communication with England. One word more. I should wish to rank the husband of my ward in the number of my friends. If he did not oppose the political opinions with which I identify my own career, I should be pleased to make any rise in the world achieved by me assist to the raising of himself. But my opinions, as during the time we were brought together you were made aware, are those of a practical man of the world, and have nothing in common with Communists, Socialists, Internationalists, or whatever sect would place the aged societies of Europe in Medea's caldron of youth. At a moment like the present, fanatics and dreamers so abound, that the number of such sinners will necessitate a general amnesty when order is restored. What a poet so young as you may have written or said at such a time will be readily forgotten and forgiven a year or two hence, provided he does not put his notions into violent action. But if you choose to perservere in the views you now advocate, so be it. They will not make poor Julie less a believer in your wisdom and genius. Only they will separate you from me, and a day may come when I should have the painful duty of ordering you to be shot—*Dii meliora*. Think over all I have thus frankly said. Give me your answer within forty-eight hours; and meanwhile hold no communication with my ward. I have the honor to wish you good-day."

CHAPTER XI.

THE short grim day was closing when Gustave, quitting Julie's apartment, again found

himself in the streets. His thoughts were troubled and confused. He was the more affected by Julie's impassioned love for him, by the contrast with Isaura's words and manner in their recent interview. His own ancient fancy for the "Ondine of Paris" became revived by the difficulties between their ancient intercourse which her unexpected scruples and De Mauléon's guardianship interposed. A witty writer thus defines *une passion*, "*un caprice enflammé par des obstacles.*" In the ordinary times of peace, Gustave, handsome, aspiring to reputable position in the *beau monde*, would not have admitted any considerations to compromise his station by marriage with a *figurante*. But now the wild political doctrines he had embraced separated his ambition from that *beau monde*, and combined it with ascendancy over the revolutionists of the populace —a direction which he must abandon if he continued his suit to Isaura. Then, too, the immediate possession of Julie's *dot* was not without temptation to a man who was so fond of his personal comforts, and who did not see where to turn for a dinner, if, obedient to Isaura's "prejudices," he abandoned his profits as a writer in the revolutionary press.

The inducements for withdrawal from the cause he had espoused, held out to him with so haughty a coldness by De Mauléon, were not wholly without force, though they irritated his self-esteem. He was dimly aware of the Vicomte's masculine talents for public life; and the high reputation he had already acquired among military authorities, and even among experienced and thoughtful civilians, had weight upon Gustave's impressionable temperament. But though De Mauléon's implied advice here coincided in much with the tacit compact he had made with Isaura, it alienated him more from Isaura herself, for Isaura did not bring to him the fortune which would enable him to suspend his lucubrations, watch the turn of events, and live at ease in the meanwhile; and the *dot* to be received with De Mauléon's ward had these advantages.

While thus meditating, Gustave turned into one of the *cantines* still open, to brighten his intellect with a *petit verre*, and there he found the two colleagues in the extinct Council of Ten, Paul Grimm and Edgar Férrier. With the last of these revolutionists Gustave had become intimately *lié*. They wrote in the same journal, and he willingly accepted a distraction from his self-conflict which Edgar offered him in a dinner at the Café Riche, which still offered its hospitalities at no exorbitant price. At this repast, as the drink circulated, Gustave waxed confidential. He longed, poor youth, for an adviser. Could he marry a girl who had been a ballet-dancer, and who had come into an unexpected heritage? "*Es tu fou d'en douter?*" cried Edgar. "What a sublime occasion to manifest thy scorn of the miserable *banalités* of the *bourgeoisie!* It will but increase thy moral power over the people. And then think of the money. What an aid to the cause! What a capital for the launch —journal all thine own! Besides, when our principles triumph!—as triumph they must—what would be marriage but a brief and futile ceremony, to be broken the moment thou hast cause to complain of thy wife or chafe at the bond? Only get the *dot* into thine own hands. *L'amour passe—reste la cassette.*"

Though there was enough of good in the son of Madame Rameau to revolt at the precise words in which the counsel was given, still, as the fumes of the punch yet more addled his brains, the counsel itself was acceptable; and in that sort of maddened fury which intoxication produces in some excitable temperaments, as Gustave reeled home that night leaning on the arm of stouter Edgar Ferrier, he insisted on going out of his way to pass the house in which Isaura lived, and, pausing under her window, gasped out some verses of a wild song, then much in vogue among the votaries of Felix Pyat, in which everything that existent society deems sacred was reviled in the grossest ribaldry. Happily Isaura's ear heard it not. The girl was kneeling by her bedside absorbed in prayer.

CHAPTER XII.

THREE days after the evening thus spent by Gustave Rameau, Isaura was startled by a visit from M. de Mauléon. She had not seen him since the commencement of the siege, and she did not recognize him at first glance in his military uniform.

"I trust you will pardon my intrusion,

Mademoiselle," he said, in the low sweet voice habitual to him in his gentler moods, "but I thought it became me to announce to you the decease of one who, I fear, did not discharge with much kindness the duties her connection with you imposed. Your father's second wife, afterwards Madame Selby, is no more. She died some days since in a convent to which she had retired."

Isaura had no cause to mourn the dead, but she felt a shock in the suddenness of this information; and in that sweet spirit of womanly compassion which entered so largely into her character, and made a part of her genius itself, she murmured tearfully, "The poor Signora! Why could I not have been with her in illness? She might then have learned to love me. And she died in a convent, you say? Ah, her religion was then sincere! Her end was peaceful!"

"Let us not doubt that, Mademoiselle. Certainly she lived to regret any former errors, and her last thought was directed towards such atonement as might be in her power. And it is that desire of atonement which now strangely mixes me up, Mademoiselle, in your destinies. In that desire for atonement, she left to my charge, as a kinsman, distant indeed, but still, perhaps, the nearest with whom she was personally acquainted—a young ward. In accepting that trust, I find myself strangely compelled to hazard the risk of offending you."

"Offending me? How? Pray speak openly."

"In so doing, I must utter the name of Gustave Rameau.'

Isaura turned pale and recoiled, but she did not speak.

"Did he inform me rightly that, in the last interview with him three days ago, you expressed a strong desire that the engagement between him and yourself should cease; and that you only, and with reluctance, suspended your rejection of the suit he had pressed on you, in consequence of his entreaties, and of certain assurances as to the changed direction of the talents of which we will assume that he is possessed?"

"Well, well, Monsieur," exclaimed Isaura, her whole face brightening; "and you come on the part of Gustave Rameau to say that on reflection he does not hold me to our engagement—that in honor and in conscience I am free?"

"I see," answered De Mauléon, smiling, "that I am pardoned already. It would not pain you if such were my instructions in the embassy I undertake?"

"Pain me? No. But——"

"But what?"

"Must he persist in a course which will break his mother's heart, and make his father deplore the hour that he was born? Have you influence over him, M. de Mauléon? If so, will you not exert it for his good?"

"You interest yourself still in his fate, Mademoiselle?"

"How can I do otherwise? Did I not consent to share it when my heart shrank from the thought of our union? And now when, if I understand you rightly, I am free, I cannot but think of what was best in him."

"Alas! Mademoiselle, he is but one of many—a spoilt child of that Circe, imperial Paris. Everywhere I look around, I see but corruption. It was hidden by the halo which corruption itself engenders. The halo is gone, the corruption is visible. Where is the old French manhood? Banished from the heart, it comes out only at the tongue. Were our deeds like our words, Prussia would beg on her knee to be a province of France. Gustave is the fit poet for this generation. Vanity—desire to be known for something, no matter what, no matter by whom—that is the Parisian's leading motive power;—orator, soldier, poet, all alike. Utterers of fine phrases; despising knowledge, and toil, and discipline; railing against the Germans as barbarians, against their generals as traitors; against God for not taking their part. What can be done to weld this mass of hollow bubbles into the solid form of a nation—the nation it affects to be? What generation can be born out of the unmanly race, inebriate with brag and absinthe? Forgive me this tirade; I have been reviewing the battalion I command. As for Gustave Rameau,—if we survive the siege, and see once more a Government that can enforce order, and a public that will refuse renown for balderdash,—I should not be surprised if Gustave Rameau were among the prettiest imitators of Lamartine's early 'Meditations.' Had he been born under Louis XIV. how loyal he would have been! What sacred tragedies in the style of 'Athalie'

he would have written, in the hope of an audience at Versailles! But I detain you from the letter I was charged to deliver to you. I have done so purposely, that I might convince myself that you welcome that release which your too delicate sense of honor shrank too long from demanding."

Here he took forth and placed a letter in Isaura's hand; and, as if to allow her to read it unobserved, retired to the window recess.

Isaura glanced over the letter. It ran thus:—

"I feel that it was only to your compassion that I owed your consent to my suit. Could I have doubted that before, your words when we last met sufficed to convince me. In my selfish pain at the moment, I committed a great wrong. I would have held you bound to a promise from which you desired to be free. Grant me pardon for that, and for all the faults by which I have offended you. In cancelling our engagement, let me hope that I may rejoice in your friendship, your remembrance of me, some gentle and kindly thought. My life may henceforth pass out of contact with yours; but you will ever dwell in my heart, an image pure and holy as the saints in whom you may well believe—they are of your own kindred."

"May I convey to Gustave Rameau any verbal reply to his letter?" asked De Mauléon, turning as she replaced the letter on the table.

"Only my wishes for his welfare. It might wound him if I added, my gratitude for the generous manner in which he has interpreted my heart, and acceded to its desires."

"Mademoiselle, accept my congratulations. My condolences are for the poor girl left to my guardianship. Unhappily she loves this man; and there are reasons why I cannot withhold my consent to her union with him, should he demand it, now that, in the letter remitted to you, he has accepted your dismissal. If I can keep him out of all the follies and all the evils into which he suffers his vanity to mislead his reason, I will do so;—would I might say, only in compliance with your compassionate injunctions. But henceforth the infatuation of my ward compels me to take some interest in his career. Adieu, Mademoiselle! I have no fear for your happiness now."

Left alone, Isaura stood as one transfigured. All the bloom of her youth seemed suddenly restored. Round her red lips the dimples opened, countless mirrors of one happy smile. "I am free, I am free," she murmured—"joy, joy!" and she passed from the room to seek the Venosta, singing clear, singing loud, as a bird that escapes from the cage, and warbles to the heaven it regains the blissful tale of its release.

CHAPTER XIII.

In proportion to the nearer roar of the besiegers' cannon, and the sharper gripe of famine within the walls, the Parisians seemed to increase their scorn for the skill of the enemy, and their faith in the sanctity of the capital. All false news was believed as truth; all truthful news abhored as falsehood. Listen to the groups round the *cafés*. "The Prussian funds have fallen three per cent. at Berlin," says a threadbare ghost of the Bourse (he had been a clerk of Louvier's). "Ay," cries a National Guard, "read extracts from 'La Liberté.' The barbarians are in despair. Nancy is threatened, Belfort freed. Bourbaki is invading Baden. Our fleets are pointing their cannon upon Hamburg. Their country endangered, their retreat cut off, the sole hope of Bismarck and his trembling legions is to find a refuge in Paris. The increasing fury of the bombardment is a proof of their despair."

"In that case," whispered Savarin to De Brézé, "suppose we send a flag of truce to Versailles with a message from Trochu that, on disgorging their conquest, ceding the left bank of the Rhine, and paying the expenses of the war, Paris, ever magnanimous to the vanquished, will allow the Prussians to retire."

"The Prussians! Retire!" cried Edgar Ferrier, catching the last word and glancing fiercely at Savarin. "What Prussian spy have we among us? Not one of the barbarians shall escape. We have but to dismiss the traitors who have usurped the Government, proclaim the Commune, and the rights of labor, and we give birth to a Hercules that even in its cradle can strangle the vipers."

Edgar Ferrier was the sole member of his political party among the group which he thus addressed; but such was the terror which the Communists already began to inspire among the *bourgeoisie* that no one volunteered a reply. Savarin linked his arm in De Brézé's, and prudently drew him off.

"I suspect," said the former, "that we shall

soon have worse calamities to endure than the Prussian *obus* and the black loaf. The Communists will have their day."

"I shall be in my grave before then," said De Brézé, in hollow accents. "It is twenty-four hours since I spent my last fifty sous on the purchase of a rat, and I burnt the legs of my bedstead for the fuel by which that quadruped was roasted."

"*Entre nous*, my poor friend, I am much in the same condition," said Savarin, with a ghastly attempt at his old pleasant laugh. "See how I am shrunken! My wife would be unfaithful to the Savarin of her dreams if she accepted a kiss from the slender gallant you behold in me. But I thought you were in the National Guard, and therefore had not to vanish into air."

"I was a National Guard, but I could not stand the hardships, and being above the age, I obtained my exemption. As to pay, I was then too proud to claim my wage of 1 franc 25 centimes. I should not be too proud now. Ah, blessed be heaven! here comes Lemercier; he owes me a dinner—he shall pay it. *Bon jour*, my dear Frederic! How handsome you look in your *képi!* Your uniform is brilliantly fresh from the soil of powder. What a contrast to the tatterdemalions of the Line!"

"I fear," said Lemercier, ruefully, "that my costume will not look so well a day or two hence. I have just had news that will no doubt seem very glorious—in the newspapers. But then newspapers are not subjected to cannon-balls."

"What do you mean? answered De Brézé.

"I met, as I emerged from my apartment a few minutes ago, that fire-eater Victor de Mauléon, who always contrives to know what passes at head-quarters. He told me that preparations are being made for a great sortie. Most probably the announcement will appear in a proclamation to-morrow, and our troops march forth to-morrow night. The National Guard (fools and asses who have been yelling out for decisive action) are to have their wish, and to be placed in van of battle,—amongst the foremost, the battalion in which I am enrolled. Should this be our last meeting on earth, say that Frederic Lemercier has finished his part in life with *éclat*."

"Gallant friend," said De Brézé, feebly seizing him by the arm, "if it be true that thy mortal career is menaced, die as thou hast lived. An honest man leaves no debt unpaid. Thou owest me a dinner."

"Alas! ask me what is possible. I will give thee three, however, if I survive and regain my *rentes*. But to-day I have not even a mouse to share with Fox."

"Fox lives then?" cried De Brézé, with sparkling hungry eyes.

"Yes. At present he is making the experiment how long an animal can live without food."

"Have mercy upon him, poor beast! Terminate his pangs by a noble death. Let him save thy friends and thyself from starving. For myself alone I do not plead; I am but an amateur in polite literature. But Savarin, the illustrious Savarin,—in criticism the French Longinus—in poetry the Parisian Horace—in social life the genius of gaiety in pantaloons,—contemplate his attenuated frame! Shall he perish for want of food while thou hast such superfluity in thy larder? I appeal to thy heart, thy conscience, thy patriotism. What, in the eyes of France, are a thousand Foxes compared to a single Savarin?

"At this moment," sighed Savarin, "I could swallow anything, however nauseous, even thy flattery, De Brézé. But, my friend Frederic, thou goest into battle—what will become of Fox if thou fall? Will he not be devoured by strangers? Surely it were a sweeter thought to his faithful heart to furnish a repast to thy friends?—his virtues acknowledged, his memory blest?"

"Thou dost look very lean, my poor Savarin! And how hospitable thou wert when yet plump!" said Frederic, pathetically. "And certainly, if I live, Fox will starve; if I am slain, Fox will be eaten. Yet, poor Fox, dear Fox, who lay on my breast when I was frost-bitten. No; I have not the heart to order him to the spit for you. Urge it not."

"I will save thee that pang," cried De Brézé. "We are close by thy rooms. Excuse me for a moment: I will run in and instruct thy *bonne*."

So saying he sprang forward with an elasticity of step which no one could have anticipated from his previous languor. Frederic would have followed, but Savarin clung to him,

whimpering—"Stay; I shall fall like an empty sack, without the support of thine arm, young hero. Pooh! of course De Brézé is only joking—a pleasant joke. Hist!—a secret: he has moneys, and means to give us once more a dinner at his own cost, pretending that we dine on thy dog. He was planning this when thou camest up. Let him have his joke, and we shall have a *festin de Balthazar*."

"Hein!" said Frederic, doubtfully; "thou art sure he has no designs upon Fox?"

"Certainly not, except in regaling us. Donkey is not bad, but it is 14 francs a lb. A pullet is excellent, but it is 30 francs. Trust to De Brézé; we shall have donkey and pullet, and Fox shall feast upon the remains."

Before Frederic could reply, the two men were jostled and swept on by a sudden rush of a noisy crowd in their rear. They could but distinguish the words—Glorious news—victory—Faidherbe—Chanzy. But these words were sufficient to induce them to join willingly in the rush. They forgot their hunger; they forgot Fox. As they were hurried on, they learned that there was a report of a complete defeat of the Prussians by Faidherbe near Amiens,—of a still more decided one on the Loire by Chanzy. These generals, with armies flushed with triumph, were passing on towards Paris to accelerate the destruction of the hated Germans. How the report arose no one exactly knew. All believed it, and were making their way to the Hotel de Ville to hear it formally confirmed.

Alas! before they got there they were met by another crowd returning, dejected but angry. No such news had reached the Government. Chanzy and Faidherbe were no doubt fighting bravely, with every probability of success; but——

The Parisian imagination required no more. "We should always be defeating the enemy," said Savarin, "if there were not always a *but*;" and his audience, who, had he so expressed himself ten minutes before, would have torn him to pieces, now applauded the epigram; and with execrations on Trochu, mingled with many a peal of painful sarcastic laughter, vociferated and dispersed.

As the two friends sauntered back towards the part of the Boulevard on which De Brézé had parted company with them, Savarin quitted Lemercier suddenly and crossed the street to accost a small party of two ladies and two men who were on their way to the Madeleine. While he was exchanging a few words with them, a young couple, arm in arm, passed by Lemercier,—the man in the uniform of the National Guard — uniform as unsullied as Frederic's, but with as little of a military air as can well be conceived. His gait was slouching; his head bent downwards. He did not seem to listen to his companion, who was talking with quickness and vivacity, her fair face radiant with smiles. Lemercier looked after them as they passed by. "*Sur mon âme*," muttered Frederic to himself, "surely that is *la belle* Julie; and she has got back her truant poet at last."

While Lemercier thus soliloquized. Gustave, still looking down, was led across the street by his fair companion, and into the midst of the little group with whom Savarin had paused to speak. Accidentally brushing against Savarin himself, he raised his eyes with a start, about to mutter some conventional apology, when Julie felt the arm on which she lent tremble nervously. Before him stood Isaura, the Countess de Vandemar by her side; her two other companions, Raoul and the Abbé Vertpré, a step or two behind.

Gustave uncovered, bowed low, and stood mute and still for a moment, paralyzed by surprise and the chill of a painful shame.

Julie's watchful eyes, following his, fixed themselves on the same face. On the instant she divined the truth. She beheld her to whom she had owed months of jealous agony, and over whom, poor child, she thought she had achieved a triumph. But the girl's heart was so instinctively good that the sense of triumph was merged in a sense of compassion. Her rival had lost Gustave. To Julie the loss of Gustave was the loss of all that makes life worth having. On her part, Isaura was moved not only by the beauty of Julie's countenance, but still more by the childlike ingenousness of its expression.

So, for the first time in their lives, met the child and the stepchild of Louise Duval. Each so deserted, each so left alone and inexperienced amid the perils of the world, with fates so different, typifying orders of Womanhood so opposed. Isaura was naturally the first to break the silence that weighed like a sensible load on all present.

She advanced towards Rameau, with sincere kindness in her look and tone.

"Accept my congratulations," she said, with a grave smile. "Your mother informed me last evening of your nuptials. Without doubt I see Madame Gustave Rameau;" — and she extended her hand towards Julie. The poor Ondine shrank back for a moment, blushing up to her temples. It was the first hand which a woman of spotless character had extended to her since she had lost the protection of Madame Surville. She touched it timidly, humbly, then drew her bridegroom on; and with head more downcast than Gustave, passed through the group without a word.

She did not speak to Gustave till they were out of sight and hearing of those they had left. Then, pressing his arm passionately, she said, "And that is the *demoiselle* thou hast resigned for me! Do not deny it. I am so glad to have seen her; it has done me so much good. How it has deepened, purified, my love for thee! I have but one return to make; but that is my whole life. Thou shalt never have cause to blame me—never—never!"

Savarin looked very grave and thoughtful when he rejoined Lemercier.

"Can I believe my eyes?" said Frederic. "Surely that was Julie Caumartin leaning on Gustave Rameau's arm! And had he the assurance, so accompanied, to salute Madame de Vandemar, and Mademoiselle Cicogna, to whom I understood he was affianced? Nay, did I not see Mademoiselle shake hands with the Ondine? or am I under one of the illusions which famine is said to engender in the brain?"

"I have not strength now to answer all these interrogatives. I have a story to tell; but I keep it for dinner. Let us hasten to thy apartment. De Brézé is doubtless there waiting us."

CHAPTER XIV.

UNPRESCIENT of the perils that awaited him, absorbed in the sense of existing discomfort, cold, and hunger, Fox lifted his mournful visage from his master's dressing-gown, in which he had encoiled his shivering frame, on the entrance of De Brézé and the *concierge* of the house in which Lemercier had his apartment. Recognizing the Vicomte as one of his master's acquaintances, he checked the first impulse that prompted him to essay a feeble bark, and permitted himself, with a petulant whine, to be extracted from his covering, and held in the arms of the murderous visitor.

"*Dieu de dieu!*" ejaculated De Brézé, "how light the poor beast has become!" Here he pinched the sides and thighs of the victim. "Still," he said, "there is some flesh yet on these bones. You may grill the paws, *fricasser* the shoulders, and roast the rest. The *rognons* and the head accept for yourself as a perquisite." Here he transferred Fox to the arms of the *concierge*, adding, "*Vite à la besogne, mon ami.*"

"Yes, Monsieur. I must be quick about it while my wife is absent. She has a *faiblesse* for the brute. He must be on the spit before she returns."

"Be it so; and on the table in an hour—five o'clock precisely—I am famished."

The *concierge* disappeared with Fox. De Brézé then amused himself by searching into Frederic's cupboards and *buffets*, from which he produced a cloth and utensils necessary for the repast. These he arranged with great neatness, and awaited in patience the moment of participation in the feast.

The hour of five had struck before Savarin and Frederic entered the *salon;* and at their sight De Brézé dashed to the staircase and called out to the *concierge* to serve the dinner.

Frederic, though unconscious of the Thyestean nature of the banquet, still looked round for the dog; and, not perceiving him, began to call out, "Fox! Fox! where hast thou hidden thyself?"

"Tranquillize yourself," said De Brézé. "Do not suppose that I have not . . . ."

NOTE BY THE AUTHOR'S SON.*—The hand that wrote thus far has left unwritten the last scene of the tragedy of poor Fox. In the deep where Prospero has dropped his wand are now irrevocably buried the humor and the pathos of this cynophagous banquet. One detail of it, however, which the author imparted to his son, may here be faintly indicated. Let the sympathizing reader recognize all that is dramatic in the conflict between hunger and affection; let him recall to mind the lachrymose loving-kindness of his own post-prandial emotions after blissfully breaking some fast, less mer-

* See also Prefatory Note.

cilessly prolonged, we will hope, then that of these besieged banqueters; and then, though unaided by the fancy which conceived so quaint a situation, he may perhaps imagine what tearful tenderness would fill the eyes of the kind-hearted Frederic, as they contemplate the well-picked bones of his sacrificed favorite on the platter before him; which he pushes away, sighing, "Ah, poor Fox! how he would have enjoyed those bones!"

The chapter immediately following this one also remains unfinished. It was not intended to close the narrative thus left uncompleted; but of those many and so various works which have not unworthily associated with almost every department of literature the name of a single English writer, it is CHAPTER THE LAST. Had the author lived to finish it, he would doubtless have added to his Iliad of the Siege of Paris its most epic episode, by here describing the mighty combat between those two princes of the Parisian Bourse, the magnanimous Duplessis and the redoubtable Louvier. Amongst the few other pages of the book which have been left unwritten, we must also reckon with regret some page descriptive of the reconciliation between Graham Vane and Isaura Cicogna; but, fortunately for the satisfaction of every reader who may have followed thus far the fortunes of "The Parisians," all that our curiosity is chiefly interested to learn has been recorded in the *Envoi*, which was written before the completion of the novel.

We know not, indeed, what has become of those two Parisian types of a Beauty not of Holiness, the poor vain Poet of the *Pave*, and the good-hearted Ondine of the Gutter. It is obvious, from the absence of all allusion to them in Lemercier's lettter to Vane, that they had passed out of the narrative before that letter was written. We must suppose the catastrophe of their fates to have been described, in some preceding chapter, by the author himself; who would assuredly not have left M. Gustave Rameau in permanant possession of his ill-merited and ill-ministered fortune. That French representative of the appropriately popular poetry of modern ideas, which prefers "the roses and raptures of vice" to "the lilies and languors of virtue," cannot have been irredeemably reconciled by the sweet savors of the domestic *pot-au-feu*, even when spiced with pungent whiffs of repudiated disreputability, to any selfish betrayal of the cause of universal social emancipation from the personal proprieties. If poor Julie Caumartin has perished in the siege of Paris, with all the grace of a self-wrought redemption still upon her, we shall doubtless deem her fate a happier one than any she could have found in prolonged existence as Madame Rameau; and a certain modicum of this world's good things will, in that case, have been rescued for worthier employment by Graham Vane. To that assurance nothing but Lemercier's description of the fate of Victor de Mauléon (which will be found in the *Envoi*) need be added for the satisfaction of our sense of poetic justice; and, if on the mimic stage, from which they now disappear, all these puppets have rightly played their parts in the drama of an empire's fall, each will have helped to "point a moral" as well as to "adorn a tale." *Valete et plaudite?* L.

CHAPTER THE LAST.

AMONG the refugees which the *convoi* from Versailles disgorged on the Paris station were two men, who, in pushing through the crowd, came suddenly face to face with each other.

"Aha! *Bon jour*, M. Duplessis," said a burly voice.

"*Bon jour*, M. Louvier," replied Duplessis.

"How long have you left Bretagne?"

"On the day that the news of the armistice reached it, in order to be able to enter Paris the first day its gates were open. And you—where have you been?"

"In London."

"Ah! in London!" said Duplessis, paling. "I knew I had an enemy there."

"Enemy! I? Bah! my dear Monsieur. What makes you think me your enemy?"

"I remember your threats."

"*A propos* of Rochebriant. By the way, when would it be convenient to you and the dear Marquis to let me into prompt possession of that property? You can no longer pretend to buy it as a *dot* for Mademoiselle Valérie."

"I know not that yet. It is true that all the financial operations attempted by my agent in London have failed. But I may recover myself yet, now that I re-enter Paris. In the meantime, we have still six months before us; for, as you will find—if you know it not already—the interest due to you has been lodged with Messrs.—— of ——, and you cannot foreclose, even if the law did not take into consideration the national calamities as between debtor and creditor."

"Quite true. But if you cannot buy the property it must pass into my hands in a very short time. And you and the Marquis had better come to an amicable arrangement with me. *A propos*, I read in the 'Times' newspaper that Alain was among the wounded in the sortie of December."

"Yes; we learnt that through a pigeon-post. We were afraid . . . .

L'ENVOI.

THE intelligent reader will perceive that the story I relate is virtually closed with the preceding chapter; though I rejoice to think that what may be called its plot does not find its

dénouement amidst the crimes and the frenzy of the *Guerre des Communeux*. Fit subjects these, indeed, for the social annalist in times to come. When crimes that outrage humanity have their motive or their excuse in principles that demand the demolition of all upon which the civilization of Europe has its basis—worship, property, and marriage—in order to reconstruct a new civilization adopted to a new humanity, it is scarcely possible for the serenest contemporary to keep his mind in that state of abstract reasoning with which Philosophy deduces from some past evil some existent good. For my part, I believe that throughout the whole known history of mankind, even in epochs when reason is most misled and conscience most perverted, there runs visible, though fine and threadlike, the chain of destiny, which has its roots in the throne of an All-wise and an All-good; that in the wildest illusions by which multitudes are frenzied, there may be detected gleams of prophetic truths; that in the fiercest crimes which, like the disease of an epidemic, characterize a peculiar epoch under abnormal circumstances, there might be found instincts or aspirations towards some social virtues to be realized ages afterwards by happier generations, all tending to save man from despair of the future, were the whole society to unite for the joyless hour of his race in the abjuration of soul and the denial of God, because all irresistibly establishing that yearning towards an unseen future which is the leading attribute of soul, evincing the government of a divine Thought which evolves out of the discords of one age the harmonies of another, and, in the world within us as in the world without, enforces upon every unclouded reason the distinction between Providence and chance.

The account subjoined may suffice to say all that rests to be said of those individuals in whose fate, apart from the events or personages that belong to graver history, the reader of this work may have conceived an interest. It is translated from the letter of Frederic Lemercier to Graham Vane, dated June ——, a month after the defeat of the Communists.

"Dear and distinguished Englishman, whose name I honor but fail to pronounce, accept my cordial thanks for your interests in such remains of Frederic Lemercier as yet survive the ravages of famine, Equality, Brotherhood, Petroleum, and the Rights of Labor. I did not desert my Paris when M. Thiers, '*parmula non bene relicta*,' led his sagacious friends and his valiant troops to the groves of Versailles, and confided to us unarmed citizens the preservation of order and property from the insurgents whom he left in possession of our forts and cannon. I felt spell-bound by the interest of the *sinistre melodrame*, with its quick succession of scenic effects, and the metropolis of the world for its stage. Taught by experience, I did not aspire to be an actor; and even as a spectator, I took care neither to hiss nor applaud. Imitating your happy England, I observed a strict neutrality; and, safe myself from danger, left my best friends to the care of the gods.

"As to political questions, I dare not commit myself to a conjecture. At this *rouge et noir* table, all I can say is, that whichever card turns up, it is either a red or a black one. One gamester gains for the moment by the loss of the other; the table eventually ruins both.

"No one believes that the present form of government can last; every one differs as to that which can. Raoul de Vandemar is immovably convinced of the restoration of the Bourbons. Savarin is meditating a new journal devoted to the cause of the Count of Paris. De Brézé and the old Count de Passy, having in turn espoused and opposed every previous form of government, naturally go in for a perfectly novel experiment, and are for constitutional dictatorship under the Duc d'Aumale, which he is to hold at his own pleasure, and ultimately resign to his nephew the Count, under the mild title of a constitutional king;—that is, if it ever suits the pleasure of a dictator to depose himself. To me this seems the wildest of notions. If the Duc's administration were successful, the French would insist on keeping it; and if the uncle were unsuccessful, the nephew would not have a chance. Duplessis retains his faith in the Imperial dynasty; and that Imperialist party is much stronger than it appears on the surface. So many of the *bourgeoisie* recall with a sigh eighteen years of prosperous trade; so many of the military officers, so many of the civil officials, identify their career with the Napoleonic favor; and so many of the priesthood, abhorring the Republic, always liable to pass into the hands of those who assail religion,—unwilling to admit the claim of the Orleanists, are at heart for the Empire.

"But I will tell you one secret. I and all the quiet folks like me (we are more numerous than any one violent faction) are willing to accept any form of government by which we have the best chance of keeping our coats on our backs. *Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite* are gone quite out of fashion; and Mademoiselle —— has abandoned her great chant of the Marseillaise, and is drawing tears from enlightened audiences by her pathetic delivery of '*O Richard! O mon Roi!*'

"Now about the other friends of whom you ask for news.

"Wonders will never cease. Louvier and Duplessis are no longer deadly rivals. They have become sworn friends, and are meditating a great speculation in common, to commence as soon as the Prussian debt is paid off. Victor de Mauléon brought about this reconciliation in a single interview during the brief interregnum between the Peace and the *Guerre des Communeux*. You know how sternly Louvier was bent upon seizing Alain de Rochebriant's estates. Can you conceive the true cause? Can you imagine it possible that a hardened money-maker like Louvier should ever allow himself to be actuated, one way or the other, by the romance of a sentimental wrong? Yet so it was. It seems that many years ago he was desperately in love

with a girl who disappeared from his life, and whom he believed to have been seduced by the late Marquis de Rochebriant. It was in revenge for this supposed crime that he had made himself the principal mortgagee of the late Marquis; and, visiting the sins of the father on the son, had, under the infernal disguise of friendly interest, made himself sole mortgagee to Alain, upon terms apparently the most generous. The demon soon showed his *griffe*, and was about to foreclose, when Duplessis came to Alain's relief; and Rochebriant was to be Valérie's *dot* on her marriage with Alain. The Prussian war, of course, suspended all such plans, pecuniary and matrimonial. Duplessis, whose resources were terrible crippled by the war, attempted operations in London with a view of raising the sum necessary to pay off the mortgage—found himself strangely frustrated and baffled. Louvier was in London, and defeated his rival's agent in every speculation. It became impossible for Duplessis to redeem the mortgage. The two men came to Paris with the peace. Louvier determined both to seize the Breton lands and to complete the ruin of Duplessis; when he learned from De Mauléon that he had spent half his life in a baseless illusion; that Alain's father was innocent of the crime for which his son was to suffer;—and Victor, with that strange power over men's minds which was so peculiar to him, talked Louvier into mercy if not into repentance. In short, the mortgage is to be paid off by instalments at the convenience of Duplessis. Alain's marriage with Valérie is to take place in a few weeks. The *fournisseurs* are already gone to fit up the old château for the bride, and Louvier is invited to the wedding.

"I have all this story from Alain, and from Duplessis himself. I tell the tale as 'twas told to me, with all the gloss of sentiment upon its woof. But between ourselves, I am too Parisian not to be sceptical as to the unalloyed amiability of sudden conversions. And I suspect that Louvier was no longer in a condition to indulge in the unprofitable whim of turning rural seigneur. He had sunk large sums and incurred great liabilities in the new street to be called after his name: and that street has been twice ravaged, first by the Prussian siege, and next by the *Guerre des Communeux;* and I can detect many reasons why Louvier should deem it prudent not only to withdraw from the Rochebriant seizure, and make sure of peacefully recovering the capital lent on it, but establishing joint interest and *quasi*-partnership with a financier so brilliant and successful as Armand Duplessis has hitherto been.

"Alain himself is not quite recovered from his wound, and is now at Rochebriant, nursed by his aunt and Valérie. I have promised to visit him next week. Raoul de Vandemar is still at Paris with his mother, saying there is no place where one Christian man can be of such service. The old Count declines to come back, saying there is no place where a philosopher can be in such danger.

"I reserve as my last communication, in reply to your questions, that which is the gravest. You say that you saw in the public journals brief notice of the assassination of Victor de Mauléon; and you ask for such authentic particulars as I can give of that event, and of the motives of the assassin.

"I need not, of course, tell you how bravely the poor Vicomte behaved throughout the siege; but he made many enemies among the worst members of the National Guard by the severity of his discipline; and had he been caught by the mob the same day as Clement Thomas, who committed the same offence, would have certainly shared the fate of that general. Though elected a *depute*, he remained at Paris a few days after Thiers and Co. left it, in the hope of persuading the party of Order, including then no small portion of the National Guards, to take prompt and vigorous measures to defend the city against the Communists. Indignant at their pusillanimity, he then escaped to Versailles. There he more than confirmed the high reputation he had acquired during the siege, and impressed the ablest public men with the belief that he was destined to take a very leading part in the strife of party. When the Versailles troops entered Paris, he was, of course, among them in command of a battalion.

"He escaped safe through the horrible war of barricades, though no man more courted danger. He inspired his men with his own courage. It was not till the revolt was quenched on the evening of the 20th May that he met his death. The Versailles soldiers, naturally exasperated, were very prompt in seizing and shooting at once every passenger who looked like a foe. Some men under De Mauléon had seized upon one of these victims and were hurrying him into the next street for execution, when, catching sight of the Vicomte, he screamed out 'Lebeau, save me!'

"At that cry De Mauléon rushed forward, arrested his soldiers, cried, 'This man is innocent—a harmless physician. I answer for him.' As he thus spoke, a wounded Communist, lying in the gutter amidst a heap of the slain, dragged himself up, reeled toward De Mauléon, plunged a knife between his shoulders, and dropped down dead.

"The Vicomte was carried into a neighboring house, from all the windows of which the tricolor was suspended; and the *Medecin* whom he had just saved from summary execution examined and dressed his wound. The Vicomte lingered for more than an hour, but expired in the effort to utter some words, the sense of which those about him endeavored in vain to seize.

"It was from the *Medecin* that the name of the assassin and the motive of the crime were ascertained. The miscreant was a Red Republican and Socialist named Armand Monnier. He had been a very skilful workman, and earning, as such, high wages. But he thought fit to become an active revolutionary politician, first led into schemes for upsetting the world by the existing laws of marriage, which had inflicted on him one woman who ran away from him, but being still legally his wife, forbade him to marry another woman with whom he lived, and to whom he seems to have been passionately attached.

"These schemes, however, he did not put into any positive practice till he fell in with a certain Jean Lebeau, who exercised great influence over him, and by whom he was admitted into one of the secret revolutionary societies which had for their object the overthrow of the Empire. After that time his head became turned. The fall of the Empire put an end to the society he had joined: Lebeau dissolved it. During the siege Monnier was a sort of leader among the *ouvriers;* but as it advanced and famine commenced, he contracted the habit of intoxication. His children died of cold and hunger. The woman he lived with followed them to the grave. Then he seems to have become a ferocious madman, and to have been implicated in the worst crimes of the Communists. He cherished a wild desire of revenge against this Jean Lebeau, to whom

he attributed all his calamities, and by whom, he said, his brother had been shot in the sortie of December.

"Here comes the strange part of the story. This Jean Lebeau is alleged to have been one and the same person with Victor de Mauléon. The *Medecin* I have named, and who is well known in Bleleville and Montmartre as the *Medecin des Pauvres*, confesses that he belonged to the secret society organized by Lebeau; that the disguise the Vicomte assumed was so complete that he should not have recognized his identity with a conspirator but for an accident. During the latter time of the bombardment, he, the *Medecin des Pauvres*, was on the eastern ramparts, and his attention was suddenly called to a man mortally wounded by the splinter of a shell. While examining the nature of the wound, De Mauléon, who was also on the ramparts, came to the spot. The dying man said, 'M. le Vicomte, you owe me a service. My name is Marc le Roux. I was on the police before the war. When M. de Mauléon resumed his station, and was making himself obnoxious to the Emperor, I might have denounced him as Jean Lebeau the conspirator. I did not. The siege has reduced me to want. I have a child at home—a pet. Don't let her starve.' 'I will see to her,' said the Vicomte. Before we could get the man into the ambulance cart he expired.

The *Medecin* who told this story I had the curiosity to see myself, and cross-question. I own I believe his statement. Whether De Mauléon did or did not conspire against a fallen dynasty, to which he owed no allegiance, can little if at all injure the reputation he has left behind of a very remarkable man—of great courage and great ability—who might have had a splendid career if he had survived. But, as Savarin says truly, the first bodies which the car of revolution crushes down are those which first harness themselves to it.

"Among De Mauléon's papers is the programme of a constitution fitted for France. How it got into Savarin's hands I know not. De Mauléon left no will, and no relations came forward to claim his papers. I asked Savarin to give me the heads of the plan, which he did. They are as follows:—

"'The American republic is the sole one worth studying, for it has lasted. The causes of its duration are in the checks to democratic fickleness and disorder. 1st. No law affecting the Constitution can be altered without the consent of two-thirds of Congress. 2d. To counteract the impulses natural to a popular Assembly chosen by universal suffrage, the greater legislative powers, especially in foreign affairs, are vested in the Senate, which has even executive as well as legislative functions. 3d. The Chief of the State, having elected his government, can maintain it independent of hostile majorities in either Assembly.

"'These three principles of safety to form the basis of any new constitution of France.

"'For France it is essential that the chief magistrate, under whatever title he assume, should be as irresponsible as an English sovereign. Therefore he should not preside at his councils; he should not lead his armies. The day for personal government is gone, even in Prussia. The safety for order in a State is, that when things go wrong, the Ministry changes, the State remains the same. In Europe, Republican institutions are safer where the chief magistrate is hereditary than where elective.'

"Savarin says these axioms are carried out at length, and argued with great ability.

"I am very grateful for your proffered hospitalities in England. Some day I shall accept them—viz., whenever I decide on domestic life, and the calm of the conjugal *foyer*. I have a *penchant* for an English *Mees*, and am not exacting as to the *dot*. Thirty thousand livres sterling would satisfy my—a trifle, I believe, to you rich islanders.

"Meanwhile I am naturally compelled to make up for the miseries of that horrible siege. Certain moralizing journals tells us that, sobered by misfortunes, the Parisians are going to turn over a new leaf, become studious and reflective, despise pleasure and luxury, and live like German professors. Don't believe a word of it. My conviction is that, whatever may be said as to our frivolity, extravagance, etc., under the Empire, we shall be just the same under any form of government—the bravest, the most timid, the most ferocious, the kindest-hearted, the most irrational, the most intelligent, the most contradictory, the most consistent people whom Jove, taking counsel of Venus and the Graces, Mars and the Furies, ever created for the delight and terror of the world;—in a word, the Parisians. —Votre tout dévoné.

"FREDERIC LEMERCIER."

It is a lovely noon on the bay of Sorrento towards the close of the autumn of 1871, upon the part of the craggy shore, to the left of the town, on which her first perusal of the loveliest poem in which the romance of Christian heroism has ever combined elevation of thought with silvery delicacies of speech, had charmed her childhood, reclined the young bride of Graham Vane. They were in the first month of their marriage Isaura had not yet recovered from the effects of all that had preyed upon her life, from the hour in which she had deemed that in her pursuit of fame she had lost the love that had colored her genius and inspired her dreams, to that in which . . . .

The physicians consulted agreed in insisting on her passing the winter in a southern climate; and after their wedding, which took place in Florence, they thus came to Sorrento.

As Isaura is seated on the small smoothed rocklet, Graham reclines at her feet, his face upturned to hers with an inexpressible wistful anxiety in his impassioned tenderness. "You are sure you feel better and stronger since we have been here?"

END OF "THE PARISIANS."

WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?

WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?

BOOK FIRST.

CHAPTER I.

In which the History opens with a description of the Social Manners, Habits, and Amusements of the English People, as exhibited in an immemorial National Festivity.—Characters to be commemorated in the History, introduced and graphically portrayed, with a nasological illustration.—Original suggestions as to the idiosyncrasies engendered by trades and callings, with other matters worthy of note, conveyed in artless dialogue after the manner of Herodotus, Father of History (Mother unknown).

It was a summer fair in one of the prettiest villages in Surrey. The main street was lined with booths, abounding in toys, gleaming crockery, gay ribbons, and gilded gingerbread. Farther on, where the street widened into the ample village-green, rose the more pretending fabrics which lodged the attractive forms of the Mermaid, the Norfolk Giant, the Pig-faced Lady, the Spotted Boy, and the Calf with Two Heads; while high over even these edifices, and occupying the most conspicuous vantage-ground, a lofty stage promised to rural play-goers the "Grand Melodramatic Performance of The Remorseless Baron and the Bandit's Child." Music, lively if artless, resounded on every side;—drums, fifes, penny-whistles, cat-calls, and a hand-organ played by a dark foreigner from the height of whose shoulder a cynical but observant monkey eyed the hubbub and cracked his nuts.

It was now sunset—the throng at the fullest—an animated joyous scene. The day had been sultry; no clouds were to be seen, except low on the western horizon, where they stretched, in lengthened ridges of gold and purple, like the borderland between earth and sky. The tall elms on the green were still, save, near the great stage, one or two, upon which had climbed young urchins, whose laughing faces peered forth, here and there, from the foliage trembling under their restless movements.

Amidst the crowd, as it streamed saunteringly along, were two spectators—strangers to the place, as was notably proved by the attention they excited, and the broad jokes their dress and appearance provoked from the rustic wits,—jokes which they took with amused good-humor and sometimes retaliated with a zest which had already made them very popular personages; indeed, there was that about them which propitiated liking. They were young, and the freshness of enjoyment was so visible in their faces, that it begot a sympathy, and wherever they went, other faces brightened round them.

One of the two whom we have thus individualized was of that enviable age, ranging from five-and-twenty to seven-and-twenty, in which, if a man cannot contrive to make life very pleasant,—pitiable, indeed, must be the state of his digestive organs. But you might see by this gentleman's countenance that if there were many like him, it would be a worse world for the doctors. His cheek, though not highly colored, was yet ruddy and clear; his hazel eyes were lively and keen; his hair, which escaped in loose clusters from a jean shooting-cap set jauntily on a well-shaped head, was of that deep sunny auburn rarely seen but in persons of vigorous and hardy temperament. He was good-looking on the

whole, and would have deserved the more flattering epithet of handsome, but for his nose, which was what the French call "a nose in the air"—not a nose supercilious, not a nose provocative, as such noses mostly are, but a nose decidedly in earnest to make the best of itself and of things in general—a nose that would push its way up in life, but so pleasantly that the most irritable fingers would never itch to lay hold of it. With such a nose a man might play the violoncello, marry for love, or even write poetry, and yet not go to the dogs. Never would he stick in the mud so long as he followed that nose in the air.

By the help of that nose this gentleman wore a black velveteen jacket of foreign cut; a mustache and imperial (then much rarer in England than they have been since the siege of Sebastopol); and yet left you perfectly convinced that he was an honest Englishman, who had not only no designs on your pocket, but would not be easily duped by any designs upon his own.

The companion of the personage thus sketched might be somewhere about seventeen; but his gait, his air, his lithe vigorous frame, showed a manliness at variance with the boyish bloom of his face. He struck the eye much more than his elder comrade. Not that he was regularly handsome—far from it; yet it is no paradox to say that he was beautiful—at least, few indeed were the women who would not have called him so. His hair, long like his friend's, was of a dark chestnut, with gold gleaming through it where the sun fell, inclining to curl, and singularly soft and silken in its texture. His large, clear, dark-blue, happy eyes were fringed with long ebon lashes, and set under brows which already wore the expression of intellectual power, and, better still, of frank courage and open loyalty. His complexion was fair, and somewhat pale, and his lips in laughing showed teeth exquisitely white and even. But though his profile was clearly cut, it was far from the Greek ideal; and he wanted the height of stature which is usually considered essential to the personal pretensions of the male sex. Without being positively short, he was still under middle height, and from the compact development of his proportions, seemed already to have attained his full growth. His dress, though not foreign, like his comrade's, was peculiar;—a broad-brimmed straw-hat, with a wide blue ribbon; shirt-collar turned down, leaving the throat bare; a dark-green jacket of thinner material than cloth; white trousers and waistcoat completed his costume. He looked like a mother's darling—perhaps he was one.

Scratch across his back went one of those ingenious mechanical contrivances familiarly in vogue at fairs, which are designed to impress upon the victim to whom they are applied, the pleasing conviction that his garment is rent in twain.

The boy turned round so quickly that he caught the arm of the offender—a pretty village-girl, a year or two younger than himself, "Found in the act, sentenced, punished," cried he, snatching a kiss, and receiving a gentle slap. "And now good for evil, here's a ribbon for you—choose."

The girl slunk back shyly, but her companions pushed her forward, and she ended by selecting a cherry-colored ribbon, for which the boy paid carelessly, while his elder and wiser friend looked at him with grave compassionate rebuke, and grumbled out,—"Dr. Franklin tells us that once in his life he paid too dear for a whistle; but then he was only seven years old, and a whistle has its uses. But to pay such a price for a scratchback!—Prodigal! Come along."

As the friends strolled on, naturally enough all the young girls who wished for ribbons, and were possessed of scratchbacks, followed in their wake. Scratch went the instruments, but in vain.

"Lasses," said the elder, turning sharply upon them his nose in the air, "ribbons are plentiful—shillings scarce; and kisses, though pleasant in private, are insipid in public. What, still! Beware! know that, innocent as we seem, we are women-eaters; and if you follow us farther, you are devoured!" So saying, he expanded his jaws to a width so preternaturally large, and exhibited a row of grinders so formidable, that the girls fell back in consternation. The friends turned down a narrow alley between the booths, and though still pursued by some adventurous and mercenary spirits, were comparatively undisturbed as they threaded their way along the back of the booths, and arrived at last on the village-green, and in front of the Great Stage.

"Oho, Lionel!" quoth the elder friend·

"Thespian and classical—worth seeing no doubt." Then turning to a grave cobbler in leathern apron, who was regarding with saturnine interest the motley figures ranged in front of the curtain as the "*Dramatis Personæ*," he said, "You seem attracted, sir; you have probably already witnessed the performance."

"Yes," returned the Cobbler; "this is the third day, and to-morrow's the last. I arn't missed once yet, and I shan't miss; but it arn't what it was awhile back."

"That is sad; but then the same thing is said of everything by everybody who has reached your respectable age, friend. Summers, and suns, stupid old watering-places, and pretty young women, 'arn't what they were awhile back.' If men and things go on degenerating in this way, our grandchildren will have a dull time of it."

The Cobbler eyed the young man, and nodded approvingly. He had sense enough to comprehend the ironical philosophy of the reply—and our Cobbler loved talk out of the common way. "You speaks truly and cleverly, sir. But if old folks do always say that things are worse than they were, ben't there always summat in what is always said? I'm for the old times; my neighbor, Joe Spruce, is for the new, and says we are all a-progressing. But he's a pink—I'm a blue."

"You are a blue!" said the boy Lionel—"I don't understand."

"Young 'un, I'm a Tory—that's blue; and Spruce is a Rad—that's pink! And, what is more to the purpose, he is a tailor, and I'm a cobbler."

"Aha!" said the elder, with much interest; "more to the purpose is it? How so?"

The Cobbler put the forefinger of the right hand on the forefinger of the left; it is the gesture of a man about to ratiocinate or demonstrate—as Quintilian, in his remarks on the oratory of fingers, probably observes; or if he has failed to do so, it is a blot in his essay.

"You see, sir," quoth the Cobbler, "that a man's business has a deal to do with his manner of thinking. Every trade, I take it, has ideas as belong to it. Butchers don't see life as bakers do; and if you talk to a dozen tallow-chandlers, then to a dozen blacksmiths, you will see tallow-chandlers are peculiar, and blacksmiths too."

"You are a keen observer," said he of the jean cap, admiringly; "your remark is new to me; I daresay it is true."

"Course it is; and the stars have summat to do with it; for if they order a man's calling, it stands to reason that they order a man's mind to fit it. Now, a tailor sits on his board with others, and is always a-talking with 'em, and a reading the news; therefore he thinks, as his fellows do, smart and sharp, bang up to the day, but nothing 'riginal and all his own, like. But a cobbler," continued the man of leather, with a majestic air, "sits by hisself, and talks with hisself; and what he thinks gets into his head without being put there by another man's tongue."

"You enlighten me more and more," said our friend with the nose in the air, bowing respectfully—"a tailor is gregarious, a cobbler solitary. The gregarious go with the future, the solitary stick by the past. I understand why you are a Tory, and perhaps a poet."

"Well, a bit of one," said the Cobbler, with an iron smile. "And many's the Cobbler who is a poet—or discovers marvellous things in a crystal—whereas a tailor, sir," (spoken with great contempt), "only sees the upper leather of the world's sole in a newspaper."

Here the conversation was interrupted by a sudden pressure of the crowd towards the theatre: the two young friends looked up, and saw that the new object of attraction was a little girl, who seemed scarcely ten years old, though, in truth, she was about two years older. She had just emerged from behind the curtain, made her obeisance to the crowd, and was now walking in front of the stage with the prettiest possible air of infantine solemnity. "Poor little thing!" said Lionel. "Poor little thing!" said the Cobbler. And had you been there, my reader, ten to one but you would have said the same. And yet she was attired in white satin, with spangled flounce and a tinsel jacket; and she wore a wreath of flowers (to be sure, the flowers were not real) on her long fair curls, with gaudy bracelets (to be sure, the stones were mock) on her slender arms. Still there was something in her that all this finery could not vulgarize: and since it could not vulgarize, you pitied her for it. She had one of those charming faces that look straight into the hearts of us all, young and old. And though she seemed quite self-possessed, there was no effrontery in her air, but

the ease of a little lady, with a simple child's unconsciousness that there was anything in her situation to induce you to sigh "Poor thing."

"You should see her act, young gents," said the Cobbler—"she plays uncommon. But if you had seen him as taught her—seen him a year ago."

"Who's he?"

"Waife, sir; mayhap you have heard speak of Waife?"

"I blush to say, no."

"Why, he might have made his fortune at Common Garden; but that's a long story. Poor fellow! he's broke down now, anyhow. But she takes care of him, little darling—God bless thee!" and the Cobbler here exchanged a smile and a nod with the little girl, whose face brightened when she saw him amidst the crowd.

"By the brush and pallet of Raffaelle!" cried the elder of the young men, "before I am many hours older I must have that child's head!"

"Her head, man!" cried the Cobbler, aghast.

"In my sketch-book. You are a poet—I a painter. You know the little girl?"

"Don't I! She and her grandfather lodge with me—her grandfather—that's Waife—marbellous man! But they ill-uses him; and if it warn't for her, he'd starve. He fed them all once; he can feed them no longer—he'd starve. That's the world; they use up a genus, and when it falls on the road, push on; that's what Joe Spruce calls a-progressing. But there's the drum! they're a-going to act; won't you look in, gents?"

"Of course," cried Lionel—"of course. And, hark ye, Vance, we'll toss up which shall be the first to take that little girl's head.

"Murderer in either sense of the word!" said Vance, with a smile that would have become Correggio if a tyro had offered to toss up which should be the first to paint a cherub.

CHAPTER II.

The Historian takes a view of the British Stage as represented by the Irregular Drama, the Regular having (ere the date of the events to which this narrative is restricted) disappeared from the Vestiges of Creation.

THEY entered the little theatre, and the Cobbler with them; but the last retired modestly to the three-penny row. The young gentlemen were favored with reserved seats, price one shilling. "Very dear," murmured Vance, as he carefully buttoned the pocket to which he restored a purse woven from links of steel, after the fashion of chain mail. Ah, *Messieurs* and *Confrères* the Dramatic Authors, do not flatter yourselves that we are about to give you a complacent triumph over the Grand Melodrame of "The Remorseless Baron and the Bandit's Child." We grant it was horrible rubbish, regarded in an æsthetic point of view, but it was mightily effective in the theatrical. Nobody yawned; you did not even hear a cough, nor the cry of that omnipresent baby, who is always sure to set up an unappeasable wail in the midmost interest of a classical five-act piece, represented for the first time on the metropolitan boards. Here the story rushed on, *per fas aut ne fas*, and the audience went with it. Certes, some man who understood the stage must have put the incidents together, and then left it to each illiterate histrio to find the words—words, my dear *confrères*, signifying so little in an acting play. The movement is the thing. Grand secret! Analyze, practise it, and restore to grateful stars that lost Pleiad the British Acting Drama.

Of course the Bandit was an ill-used and most estimable man. He had some mysterious rights to the Estate and Castle of the Remorseless Baron. That titled usurper, therefore, did all in his power to hunt the Bandit out in his fastnesses, and bring him to a bloody end. Here the interest centered itself in the Bandit's child, who, we need not say, was the little girl in the wreath and spangles, styled in the play-bill "Miss Juliet Araminta Waife," and the incidents consisted in her various devices to foil the pursuit of the Baron and save her father. Some of these incidents were indebted to the Comic Muse, and kept the audience in a broad laugh. Her arch playfulness here was exquisite. With what vivacity she duped the High Sheriff, who had the com-

mands of his king to take the Bandit alive or dead, into the belief that the very Lawyer employed by the Baron was the criminal in disguise, and what pearly teeth she showed when the Lawyer was seized and gagged; how dexterously she ascertained the weak point in the character of the "King's Lieutenant" (*jeune premier*), who was deputed by his royal master to aid the Remorseless Baron in trouncing the Bandit; how cunningly she learned that she was in love with the Baron's ward (*jeune amoureuse*), whom that unworthy noble intended to force into a marriage with himself on account of her fortune; how prettily she passed notes to and fro, the Lieutenant never suspecting that she was the Bandit's child, and at last got the king's soldier on her side, as the event proved.

And oh how gaily, and with what mimic art, she stole into the Baron's castle, disguised as a witch, startled his conscience with revelations and predictions, frightened all the vassals with blue lights and chemical illusions, and venturing even into the usurper's own private chamber while that tyrant was tossing restless on the couch, over which hung his terrible sword, abstracted from his coffer the deeds that proved the better rights of the persecuted Bandit. Then, when he woke before she could escape with her treasure, and pursued her with his sword, with what glee she apparently set herself on fire, and skipped out of the casement in an explosion of crackers. And when the drama approached its *dénouement*, when the Baron's men, and the royal officers of justice, had, despite all her arts, tracked the Bandit to his cave, in which, after various retreats, he lay hidden, wounded by shots, and bruised by a fall from a precipice,—with what admirable by-play she hovered around the spot, with what pathos she sought to decoy away the pursuers —it was the skylark playing round the nest. And when all was vain—when, no longer to be deceived, the enemies sought to seize her, how mockingly she eluded them, bounded up the rock, and shook her slight finger at them in scorn. Surely she will save that estimable Bandit still! Now, hitherto, though the Bandit was the nominal hero of the piece, though you were always hearing of him—his wrongs, virtues, hairbreath escapes—he had never been seen. Not Mrs. Harris, in the immortal narrative, was more quoted and more mythical.

But in the last scene there *was* the Bandit there in his cavern, helpless with bruises and wounds, lying on a rock. In rushed the enemies, Baron, High Sheriff, and all, to seize him. Not a word spoke the Bandit, but his attitude was sublime — even Vance cried "bravo;" and just as he is seized, halter round his neck, and about to be hanged, down from the chasm above leaps his child, holding the tittle-deeds, filched from the Baron, and by her side the King's Lieutenant, who proclaims the Bandit's pardon, with due Restoration to his honors and estates, and consigns, to the astonished Sheriff, the august person of the Remorseless Baron. Then the affecting scene, father and child in each other's arms; and then an exclamation, which had been long hovering about the lips of many of the audience, broke out, "Waife, Waife!" Yes, the Bandit, who appeared but in the last scene, and even then uttered not a word, was the once great actor on that itinerant Thespian stage, known through many a fair for his exuberant humor, his impromptu jokes, his arch eye, his redundant life of drollery, and the strange pathos or dignity with which he could suddenly exalt a jester's part, and call forth tears in the startled hush of laughter; he whom the Cobbler had rightly said, "might have made a fortune at Covent Garden." There was the remnant of the old popular mime!—all his attributes of eloquence reduced to dumb show! Masterly touch of nature and of art in this representation of him—touch which all, who had ever in former years seen and heard him on that stage, felt simultaneously.

He came in for his personal portion of dramatic tears. "Waife, Waife!" cried many a village voice, as the little girl led him to the front of the stage. He hobbled; there was a bandage round his eyes. The plot, in describing the accident that had befallen the Bandit, idealized the genuine infirmities of the man—infirmities that had befallen him since last seen in that village. He was blind of one eye; he had become crippled; some malady of the trachea or larynx had seemingly broken up the once joyous key of the old pleasant voice. He did not trust himself to speak, even on that stage, but silently bent his head to the rustic audience; and Vance, who was an habitual play-goer, saw in that simple salutation that the man was an artistic actor. All was

over, the audience streamed out, much affected, and talking one to the other. It had not been at all like the ordinary stage-exhibitions at a village fair. Vance and Lionel exchanged looks of surprise, and then, by a common impulse, moved towards the stage, pushed aside the curtain, which had fallen, and were in that strange world which has so many reduplications, fragments of one broken mirror, whether in the proudest theatre, or the lowliest barn—nay, whether in the palace of kings, the cabinet of statesmen, the home of domestic life—the world we call "Behind the Scenes."

CHAPTER III.

Striking illustrations of lawless tyranny and infant avarice exemplified in the social conditions of Great Britain.—Superstitions of the Dark Ages still in force amongst the Trading Community, furnishing valuable hints to certain American journalists, and highly suggestive of reflections humiliating to the national vanity.

The Remorseless Baron, who was no other than the managerial proprietor of the stage, was leaning against a side-scene, with a pot of porter in his hand. The King's Lieutenant might be seen on the background, toasting a piece of cheese on the point of his loyal sword. The Bandit had crept into a corner, and the little girl was clinging to him fondly as his hand was stroking her fair hair. Vance looked round, and approached the Bandit—"Sir, allow me to congratulate you; your bow was admirable. I have never seen John Kemble—before my time; but I shall fancy I have seen him now—seen him on the night of his retirement from the stage. As to your grandchild, Miss Juliet Araminta, she is a perfect chrysolite."

Before Mr. Waife could reply, the Remorseless Baron stepped up in a spirit worthy of his odious and arbitrary character. "What do you do here, sir? I allow no conspirators behind the scenes earwigging my people."

"I beg pardon respectfully: I am an artist—a pupil of the Royal Academy; I should like to make a sketch of Miss Juliet Araminta."

"Sketch! nonsense."

"Sir," said Lionel, with the seasonable extravagance of early youth, "my friend would, I am sure, pay for the sitting—handsomely!"

"Ha!" said the manager, softened, "you speak like a gentleman, sir; but, sir, Miss Juliet Araminta is under my protection—in fact, she is my property. Call and speak to me about it to-morrow, before the first performance begins, which is twelve o'clock. Happy to see any of your friends in the reserved seats. Busy now, and—and—in short—excuse me—servant, sir—servant, sir."

The Baron's manner left no room for further parley. Vance bowed, smiled, and retreated. But meanwhile his young friend had seized the opportunity to speak both to Waife and his grandchild; and when Vance took his arm and drew him away, there was a puzzled musing expression on Lionel's face, and he remained silent till they had got through the press of such stragglers as still loitered before the stage, and were in a quiet corner of the sward. Stars and moon were then up—a lovely summer night.

"What on earth are you thinking of, Lionel? I have put to you three questions, and you have not answered one."

"Vance," answered Lionel, slowly, "the oddest thing! I am so disappointed in that little girl—greedy and mercenary!"

"Precocious villain! how do you know that she is greedy and mercenary?"

"Listen: when that surly old manager came up to you, I said something—civil, of course—to Waife, who answered in a hoarse broken voice, but in very good language. Well, when I told the manager that you would pay for the sitting, the child caught hold of my arm hastily, pulled me down to her own height, and whispered, 'How much will he give?' Confused by a question so point-blank, I answered at random, 'I don't know; ten shillings perhaps.' You should have seen her face!"

"See her face! radiant—I should think so. Too much by half!" exclaimed Vance. "Ten shillings! Spendthrift!"

"Too much—she looked as you might look if one offered you ten shillings for your picture of 'Julius Cæsar considering whether he should cross the Rubicon.' But when the manager had declared her to be his property, and appointed you to call to-morrow—implying that *he* was to be paid for allowing her to sit—her countenance became overcast, and she muttered sullenly, 'I'll not sit—I'll not!' Then

she turned to her grandfather, and something very quick and close was whispered between the two; and she pulled me by the sleeve, and said in my ear—oh, but so eagerly!—'I want three pounds, sir,—three pounds!—if he would give three pounds;—And come to our lodgings—Mr. Merle, Willow Lane. Three pounds—three!" And with those words hissing in my ear, and coming from that fairy mouth, which ought to drop pearls and diamonds, I left her," added Lionel, as gravely as if he were sixty, "and lost an illusion!"

"Three pounds!" cried Vance, raising his eyebrows to the highest arch of astonishment, and lifting his nose in the air towards the majestic moon,—three pounds!—a fabulous sum! Who has three pounds to throw away? Dukes, with a hundred thousand a-year in acres, have not three pounds to draw out of their pockets in that reckless profligate manner. Three pounds!—what could I not buy for three pounds! I could buy the Dramatic Library, bound in calf, for three pounds; I could buy a dress coat for three pounds (silk lining not included); I could be lodged for a month for three pounds! And a jade in tinsel, just entering on her teens, to ask three pounds for what? for becoming immortal on the canvass of Francis Vance?—bother!"

Here Vance felt a touch on his shoulder. He turned round quickly, as a man out of temper does under similar circumstances, and beheld the swart face of the Cobbler.

"Well, master, did not she act fine?—how d'ye like her?"

"Not much in her natural character; but she sets a mighty high value on herself."

"Anan, I don't take you."

"She'll not catch me taking her! Three pounds!—three kingdoms!"

"Stay," cried Lionel to the Cobbler; "did not you say she lodged with you? Are you Mr. Merle?"

"Merle's my name, and she do lodge with me—Willow Lane."

"Come this way, then, a few yards down the road—more quiet. Tell me what the child means, if you can?" and Lionel related the offer of his friend, the reply of the manager, and the grasping avarice of Miss Juliet Araminta.

The Cobbler made no answer; and when the young friends, surprised at his silence, turned to look at him, they saw he was wiping his eyes with his sleeve.

"Poor little thing!" he said at last, and still more pathetically than he had uttered the same words at her appearance in front of the stage: "'tis all for her grandfather; I guess—I guess."

"Oh," cried Lionel, joyfully, "I am so glad to think that. It alters the whole case, you see, Vance."

"It don't alter the case of the three pounds," grumbled Vance. "What's her grandfather to me, that I should give his grandchild three pounds, when any other child in the village would have leapt out of her skin to have her face upon my sketch-book and five shillings in her pocket? Hang her grandfather!"

They were now in the main road. The Cobbler seated himself on a lonely milestone, and looked first at one of the faces before him, then at the other; that of Lionel seemed to attract him the most, and in speaking it was Lionel whom he addressed.

"Young master," he said, "it is now just four years ago, when Mr. Rugge, coming here, as he and his troop had done at fair-time ever sin' I can mind of, brought with him the man you have seen to-night, William Waife; I calls him Gentleman Waife. How ever that man fell into sich straits—how he came to join sich a carawan, would puzzle most heads. It puzzles Joe Spruce, uncommon; it don't puzzle me."

"Why?" asked Vance.

"Cos of Saturn!"

"Satan!"

"Saturn—dead agin his Second and Tenth House, I'll swear. Lord of Ascendant, mayhap; — in combustion of the Sun — who knows?"

"You're not an astrologer?" said Vance, suspiciously, edging off.

"Bit of it—no offence."

"What does it signify?" said Lionel, impatiently; "go on. So you called Mr. Waife 'Gentleman Waife;' and if you had not been an astrologer you would have been puzzled to see him in such a calling."

"Ay, that's it; for he warn't like any as we ever see on these boards hereabouts; and yet he warn't exactly like a Lunnon actor, as I have seen 'em in Lunnon, either, but more

like a clever fellow who acted for the spree of the thing. He had such droll jests, and looked so comical, yet not commonlike, but always what I calls a gentleman—just as if one o' ye two were doing a bit of sport to please your friends. Well, he drew hugely, and so he did, every time he came, so that the great families in the neighborhood would go to hear him; and he lodged in my house, and had pleasant ways with him, and was what I call a scollard. But still I don't want to deceive ye, and I should judge him to have been a wild dog in his day. Mercury ill-aspected—not a doubt of it. Last year it so happened that one of the great gents who belong to a Lunnon theatre was here at fair-time. Whether he had heard of Waife chanceways, and come express to judge for hisself, I can't say; like eno'. And when he had seen Gentleman Waife act, he sent for him to the inn—Red Lion—and offered him a power o' money to go to Lunnon—Common Garden. Well, sir, Waife did not take to it all at once, but hemmed and hawed, and was at last quite coaxed into it; and so he went. But bad luck came on it; and I knew there would, for I saw it all in my crystal."

"Oh," exclaimed Vance, "a crystal, too; really it is getting late, and if you had your crystal about you, you might see that we want to sup."

"What happened?" asked Lionel, more blandly, for he saw the Cobbler, who had meant to make a great effect by the introduction of the crystal, was offended.

"What happened? why, just what I foreseed. There was an accident in the railway 'tween this and Lunnon, and poor Waife lost an eye, and was a cripple for life—so he could not go on the Lunnon stage at all; and what was worse, he was a long time atwixt life and death, and got summat bad on his chest wi' catching cold, and lost his voice, and became the sad object you have gazed on, young happy things that ye are."

"But he got some compensation from the railway, I suppose?" said Vance, with the unfeeling equanimity of a stoical demon.

"He did, and spent it. I suppose the gentleman broke out in him as soon as he had money, and ill though he was, the money went. Then it seems he had no help for it but to try and get back to Mr. Rugge. But Mr Rugge was sore and spiteful at his leaving; for Rugge counted on him, and had even thought of taking the huge theatre at York, and bringing out Gentleman Waife as his trump card. But it warn't fated. and Rugge thought himself ill-used, and so at first he would have nothing more to say to Waife. And truth is, what could the poor man do for Rugge? But then Waife produces little Sophy."

"You mean Juliet Araminta?"

"Same—in private life she be Sophy. And Waife taught her to act, and put together the plays for her. And Rugge caught at her; and she supports Waife with what she gets; for Rugge only gives him four shillings a-week, and that goes on 'baccy and suchlike."

"Suchlike—drink, I presume!" said Vance.

"No—he don't drink. But he do smoke; and he has little genteel ways with him, and four shillings goes on 'em. And they have been about the country this spring, and done well, and now they be here. But Rugge behaves shocking hard to both on 'em: and I don't believe he has any right to her in law, as he pretends—only a sort of understanding which she and her grandfather could break if they pleased; and that's what they wish to do, and that's why little Sophy wants the three pounds."

"How?" cried Lionel, eagerly. "If they had three pounds could they get away? and if they did, how could they live? Where could they go?"

"That's their secret. But I heard Waife say—the first night they came here—'that if he could get three pounds, he had hit on a plan to be independent like.' I tell you what put his back up: it was Rugge insisting on his coming on the stage agin, for he did not like to be seen such a wreck. But he was forced to give in; and so he contrived to cut up that play-story, and appear hisself at the last without speaking."

"My good friend," cried young Lionel, "we are greatly obliged to you for your story—and we should much like to see little Sophy and her grandfather at your house to-morrow—can we?"

"Certain sure you can—after the play's over; to-night, if you like."

"No, to-morrow; you see my friend is impatient to get back now—we will call to-morrow."

"'Tis the last day of their stay," said the Cobbler. "But you can't be sure to see them safely at my house afore ten o'clock at night —and not a word to Rugge! mum!"

"Not a word to Rugge," returned Lionel; "good-night to you."

The young men left the Cobbler still seated on the milestone, gazing on the stars, and ruminating. They walked briskly down the road.

"It is I who have had the talk now," said Lionel, in his softest tone. He was bent on coaxing three pounds out of his richer friend, and that might require some management. For amongst the wild youngsters in Mr. Vance's profession, there ran many a joke at the skill with which he parried irregular assaults on his purse; and that gentleman, with his nose more than usually in the air, having once observed to such scoffers "that they were quite welcome to any joke at his expense"—a wag had exclaimed, "At your expense! Don't fear; if a joke were worth a farthing, you would never give that permission."

So when Lionel made that innocent remark, the softness of his tone warned the artist of some snake in the grass—and he prudently remained silent. Lionel, in a voice still sweeter, repeated,—"It is I who have all the talk now!"

"Naturally," then returned Vance, "naturally you have, for it is you, I suspect, who alone have the intention to pay for it, and three pounds appear to be the price. Dearish eh?"

"Ah, Vance, if I had three pounds!"

"Tush! and say no more till we have supped. I have the hunger of a wolf."

Just in sight of the next mile-stone the young travellers turned a few yards down a green lane, and reached a small inn on the banks of the Thames. Here they had sojourned for the last few days, sketching, boating, roaming about the country from sunrise, and returning to supper and bed at night-fall. It was the pleasantest little inn—an arbor, covered with honey-suckle, between the porch and the river — a couple of pleasure-boats moored to the bank; and now all the waves rippling under moonlight.

"Supper and lights in the arbor," cried Vance to the waiting-maid — "hey, presto— quick! while we turn in to wash our hands. And harkye, a quart jug of that capital whisky-toddy."

CHAPTER IV.

Being a chapter that links the Past to the Future by the gradual elucidation of Antecedents.

O WAYSIDE inns and pedestrian rambles! O summer nights, under honeysuckle arbors, on the banks of starry waves! O Youth, Youth!

Vance ladled out the toddy and lighted his cigar, then leaning his head on his hand, and his elbow on the table, he looked with an artist's eye along the glancing river.

"After all," said he, "I am glad I am a painter; and I hope I may live to be a great one."

"No doubt, if you live, you will be a great one," cried Lionel, with cordial sincerity. "And if I, who can only just paint well enough to please myself, find that it gives a new charm to nature—"

"Cut sentiment," quoth Vance, "and go on."

"What," continued Lionel, unchilled by the admonitory interruption, "must you feel who can fix a fading sunshine—a fleeting face—on a scrap of canvass, and say, 'Sunshine and Beauty, live *there* for ever!'"

VANCE.—"For ever! no! Colors perish, canvass rots. What remains to us of Zeuxis? Still it is prettily said on behalf of the poetic side of the profession; there is a prosaic one —we'll blink it. Yes; I am glad to be a painter. But you must not catch the fever of my calling. Your poor mother would never forgive me if she thought I had made you a dauber by my examples."

LIONEL (gloomily).—"No. I shall not be a painter! But what can I be? How shall I ever build on the earth one of the castles I have built in the air? Fame looks so far— Fortune so impossible. But one thing I am bent upon" (speaking with knit brow and clenched teeth)—"I will gain an independence somehow, and support my mother."

VANCE.—"Your mother is supported—she has the pension—"

LIONEL.—"Of a captain's widow; and" (he added with a flushed cheek) "a first floor that she lets to lodgers."

VANCE.—"No shame in that! Peers let houses; and on the Continent, princes let not only first floors, but fifth and sixth floors, to say nothing of attics and cellars. In beginning the world, friend Lionel, if you don't wish to get chafed at every turn, fold up your pride carefully, put it under lock and key, and only let it out to air upon grand occasions. Pride is a garment all stiff brocade outside, all grating sackcloth on the side next to the skin. Even kings don't wear the dalmaticum except at a coronation. Independence you desire; good. But are you dependent now? Your mother has given you an excellent education, and you have already put it to profit. My dear boy," added Vance, with unusual warmth, "I honor you; at your age, on leaving school, to have shut yourself up, translated Greek and Latin per sheet for a bookseller, at less than a valet's wages, and all for the purpose of buying comforts for your mother; and having a few pounds in your own pockets, to rove your little holiday with me, and pay your share of the costs! Ah, there are energy and spirit and life in all that, Lionel, which will found upon rock some castle as fine as any you have built in air. Your hand, my boy."

This burst was so unlike the practical dryness, or even the more unctuous humor, of Frank Vance, that it took Lionel by surprise, and his voice faltered as he pressed the hand held out to him. He answered, "I don't deserve your praise, Vance, and I fear the pride you tell me to put under lock and key, has the larger share of the merit you ascribe to better motives. Independent? No! I have never been so."

VANCE.—"Well, you depend on a parent,—who, at seventeen, does not?"

LIONEL.—"I did not mean my mother; of course, I could not be too proud to take benefits from her. But the truth is simply this: my father had a relation, not very near, indeed—a cousin, at about as distant a remove, I fancy, as a cousin well can be. To this gentleman my mother wrote when my poor father died—and he was generous, for it is he who paid for my schooling. I did not know this till very lately. I had a vague impression, indeed, that I had a powerful and wealthy kinsman who took interest in me, but whom I had never seen."

VANCE.—"Never seen?"

LIONEL.—"No. And here comes the sting. On leaving school last Christmas, my mother, for the first time, told me the extent of my obligations to this benefactor, and informed me that he wished to know my own choice as to a profession—that if I preferred Church or Bar, he would maintain me at College."

VANCE.—"Body o' me! where's the sting in that? Help yourself to toddy, my boy, and take more general views of life."

LIONEL.—"You have not heard me out. I then asked to see my benefactor's letters; and my mother, unconscious of the pain she was about to inflict, showed me not only the last one, but all she had received from him. Oh, Vance, they were terrible those letters! The first began by a dry acquiescence in the claims of kindred—a curt proposal to pay my schooling, but not one word of kindness, and a stern proviso that the writer was never to see nor hear from me. He wanted no gratitude—he disbelieved in all professions of it. His favors would cease if I molested him. 'Molested' was the word; it was bread thrown to a dog."

VANCE.—"Tut! Only a rich man's eccentricity. A bachelor, I presume?"

LIONEL.—"My mother says he has been married, and is a widower."

VANCE.—"Any children?"

LIONEL.—"My mother says none living; but I know little or nothing about his family."

Vance looked with keen scrutiny into the face of his boy-friend, and, after a pause, said, drily—"Plain as a pikestaff. Your relation is one of those men who, having no children, suspect and dread the attention of a heir presumptive; and what has made this sting as you call it, keener to you, is—pardon me—is in some silly words of your mother, who, in showing you the letters, has hinted to you that that heir you might be, if you were sufficiently pliant and subservient. Am I not right?"

Lionel hung his head, without reply.

VANCE (cheeringly).—"So, so; no great harm as yet. Enough of the first letter. What was the last?"

LIONEL.—"Still more offensive. He, this kinsman, this patron, desired my mother to spare him those references to her son's ability and promise, which, though natural to herself, had slight interest to him—him, the condescending benefactor!—As to his opinion, what could I care for the opinion of one I had never

seen? All that could sensibly affect my—— oh, but but I cannot go on with those cutting phrases, which imply but this, 'All I can care for is the money of a man who insults me while he gives it.'"

VANCE (emphatically).—"Without being a wizard, I should say your relative was rather a disagreeable person—not what is called urbane and amiable—in fact, a brute."

LIONEL.—"You will not blame me, then, when I tell you that I resolved not to accept the offer to maintain me at college, with which the letter closed. Luckily Dr. Wallis (the head master of school), who had always been very kind to me, had just undertaken to supervise a popular translation of the classics. He recommended me, at my request, to the publisher engaged in the undertaking, as not incapable of translating some of the less difficult Latin authors—subject to his corrections. When I had finished the first instalment of the work thus intrusted to me, my mother grew alarmed for my health, and insisted on my taking some recreation. You were about to set out on a pedestrian tour. I had, as you say, some pounds in my pocket; and thus I have passed with yon the merriest days of my life."

VANCE.—"What said your civil cousin when your refusal to go to college was conveyed to him?"

LIONEL.—"He did not answer my mother's communication to that effect till just before I left home, and then—no, it was not his last letter from which I repeated that withering extract—no, the *last* was more galling still, for in it he said, that if, in spite of the ability and promise that had been so vaunted, the dulness of a college and the labor of learned professions were so distasteful to me, he had no desire to dictate to my choice, but that as he did not wish one who was, however remotely, of his blood, and bore the name of Haughton, to turn shoeblack or pickpocket—Vance—Vance!"

VANCE.—"Lock up your pride—the sackcloth frets you—and go on; and that therefore he—"

LIONEL.—"Would buy me a commission in the army, or get me an appointment in India."

VANCE.—"Which did you take?"

LIONEL (passionately).—"Which! so offered—which?—of course neither! But distrusting the tone of my mother's reply, I sate down, the evening before I left home, and wrote myself to this cruel man. I did not show my letter to my mother—did not tell her of it. I wrote shortly—that if he would not accept my gratitude, I would not accept his benefits; that shoeblack I might be—pickpocket, no! that he need not fear I should disgrace his blood or my name; and that I would not rest till, sooner or later, I had paid him back all that I had cost him, and felt relieved from the burthens of an obligation which—which—" The boy paused, covered his face with his hands, and sobbed.

Vance, though much moved, pretended to scold his friend, but finding that ineffectual, fairly rose, wound his arm brother-like round him, and drew him from the arbor to the shelving margin of the river. "Comfort," then said the Artist, almost solemnly, as here, from the inner depths of his character the true genius of the man came forth and spoke—"Comfort, and look round; see where the islet interrupts the tide, and how smilingly the stream flows on. See, just where we stand, how the slight pebbles are fretting the wave—would the wave, if not fretted, make that pleasant music? A few miles farther on, and the river is spanned by a bridge, which busy feet now are crossing; by the side of that bridge now is rising a palace;—all the men who rule England have room in that palace. At the rear of the palace soars up the old Abbey where kings have their tombs in right of the names they inherit; men, lowly as we, have found tombs there, in right of the names which they made. Think, now, that you stand on that bridge with a boy's lofty hope, with a man's steadfast courage; then turn again to that stream, calm with starlight, flowing on towards the bridge—spite of islet and pebbles."

Lionel made no audible answer, though his lips murmured, but he pressed closer and closer to his friend's side; and the tears were already dried on his cheek—though their dew still glistened in his eyes.

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CHAPTER V.

Speculations on the moral qualities of the Bandit.—Mr. Vance, with mingled emotions, foresees that the acquisition of the Bandit's acquaintance may be attended with pecuniary loss.

VANCE loosened the boat from its moorings, stepped in, and took up the oars. Lionel followed, and sate by the stern. The Artist rowed on slowly, whistling melodiously in time to the dash of the oars. They soon came to the bank of garden-ground surrounding with turf, on which fairies might have danced, one of those villas never seen out of England. From the windows of the villa the lights gleamed steadily; over the banks, dipping into the water, hung large willows breathlessly; the boat gently brushed aside their pendant boughs, and Vance rested in a grassy cove.

"And faith," said the Artist, gaily—"Faith," said he, lighting his third cigar, "it is time we should bestow a few words more on the Remorseless Baron and the Bandit's Child! What a cock-and-a-bull story the Cobbler told us! He must have thought us precious green."

LIONEL (roused).—"Nay, I see nothing so wonderful in the story, though much that is sad. You must allow that Waife may have been a good actor—you became quite excited merely at his attitude and bow. Natural, therefore, that he should have been invited to try his chance on the London stage—not improbable that he may have met with an accident by the train, and so lost his chance for ever—natural, then, that he should press into service his poor little grandchild—natural, also, that, hardly treated, and his pride hurt, he should wish to escape."

VANCE.—"And more natural than all, that he should want to extract from our pockets three pounds—the Bandit! No, Lionel, I tell you what is not probable, that he should have disposed of that clever child to a vagabond like Rugge—she plays admirably. The manager who was to have engaged him would have engaged her if he had seen her. I am puzzled."

LIONEL.—"True, she is an extraordinary child. I cannot say how she has interested me. He took out his purse, and began counting its contents. "I have nearly three pounds left," he cried, joyously. "£2. 18s. if I give up the thought of a longer excursion with you, and go quietly home——"

VANCE.—"And not pay your share of the bill yonder?"

LIONEL.—"Ah, I forgot that! But come, I am not too proud to borrow from you, and it is not for a selfish purpose.

VANCE.—"Borrow from me, Cato! That comes of falling in with bandits and their children. No, but let us look at the thing like men of sense. One story is good till another is told. I will call by myself on Rugge to-morrow, and hear what he says; and then, if we judge favorably to the Cobbler's version, we will go at night and talk with the Cobbler's lodgers; and I daresay," added Vance, kindly, but with a sigh—"I daresay the three pounds will be coaxed out of me!" After all, her head is worth it. I want an idea for Titania."

LIONEL (joyously).—"My dear Vance, you are the best fellow in the world."

VANCE—"Small compliment to humankind. Take the oars—it is your turn now."

Lionel obeyed; the boat once more danced along the tide—thoro' reeds—thoro' waves, skirting the grassy islet—out into pale moonlight. They talked but by fits and starts. What of!—a thousand things! Bright young hearts, eloquent young tongues! No sins in the past; hopes gleaming through the future. O summer nights, on the glass of starry waves! O Youth, Youth!

CHAPTER VI.

Wherein the Historian tracks the Public Characters that fret their hour on the stage, into the bosom of private life.—The reader is invited to arrive at a conclusion which may often, in periods of perplexity, restore ease to his mind: viz., that if man will reflect on all the hopes he has nourished, all the fears he has admitted, all the projects he has formed, the wisest thing he can do, nine times out of ten, with hope, fear, and project, is to let them end with the chapter—in smoke.

IT was past nine o'clock in the evening of the following day. The exhibition of Mr. Rugge's theatre had closed for the season in that village, for it was the conclusion of the fair. The final performance had been begun and ended somewhat earlier than on former nights. The theatre was to be cleared from the ground by daybreak, and the whole com-

pany to proceed onward betimes in the morning. Another fair awaited them in an adjoining county, and they had a long journey before them.

Gentleman Waife and his Juliet Araminta had gone to their lodgings over the Cobbler's stall. Their rooms were homely enough, but had an air not only of the comfortable, but the picturesque. The little sitting-room was very old-fashioned—panelled in wood that had once been painted blue—with a quaint chimney-piece that reached to the ceiling. That part of the house spoke of the time of Charles I. It might have been tenanted by a religious Roundhead; and framed-in over the low door, there was a grim faded portrait of a pinched-faced saturnine man, with long lank hair, starched band, and a length of upper-lip that betokened relentless obstinacy of character, and might have curled in sullen glee at the monarch's scaffold, or preached an interminable sermon to the stout Protector. On a table, under the deep-sunk window, were neatly arrrayed a few sober-looking old books; you would find amongst them *Colley's Astrology*, *Owen Feltham's Resolves*, *Glanville on Witches*, *the Pilgrim's Progress*, an early edition of *Paradise Lost*, and an old Bible; also two flower-pots of clay brightly reddened, and containing stocks; also two small worsted rugs, on one of which rested a carved cocca-nut, on the other an egg-shaped ball of crystal,—that last the pride and joy of the Cobbler's visionary soul.

A door left wide open communicated with an inner room (very low was its ceiling), in which the Bandit slept, if the severity of his persecutors permitted him to sleep. In the corner of the sitting-room, near that door, was a small horse-hair sofa, which, by the aid of sheets and a needlework coverlid, did duty for a bed, and was consigned to the Bandit's child. Here the tenderness of the Cobbler's heart was visible, for over the coverlid were strewed sprigs of lavender, and leaves of vervain—the last, be it said, to induce happy dreams, and scare away witchcraft and evil spirits. On another table, near the fireplace, the child was busied in setting out the tea-things for her grandfather. She had left in the property-room of the theatre her robe of spangles and tinsel, and appeared now in a simple frock. She had now no longer the look of Titania, but that of a lively, active, affectionate human child; nothing theatrical about her now, yet still, in her graceful movements, so nimble but so noiseless, in her slight fair hands, in her transparent coloring, there was Nature's own lady — that *something* which strikes us all as well-born and high-bred; not that it necessarily is so—the semblances of aristocracy, in female childhood more especially, are often delusive. The *souvenance* flower wrought into the collars of princes, springs up wild on field and fell.

Gentleman Waife, wrapped negligently in a gray dressing-gown, and seated in an old leathern easy-chair, was evidently out of sorts. He did not seem to heed the little preparations for his comfort, but, resting his cheek on his right hand, his left drooped on his crossed knees—an attitude rarely seen in a man when his heart is light and his spirits high. His lips moved — he was talking to himself. Though he had laid aside his theatrical bandage over both eyes, he wore a black patch over one, or rather where one had been; the eye exposed was of singular beauty, dark and brilliant. For the rest, the man had a striking countenance, rugged, and rather ugly than otherwise, but by no means unprepossessing; full of lines and wrinkles and strong muscle, with large lips of wondrous pliancy, and an aspect of wistful sagacity, that, no doubt, on occasion could become exquisitely comic—dry comedy—the comedy that makes others roar when the comedian himself is as grave as a judge.

You might see in his countenance, when quite in its natural repose, that Sorrow had passed by there; yet the instant the countenance broke into play, you would think that Sorrow must have been sent about her business as soon as the respect due to that visitor, so accustomed to have her own way, would permit. Though the man was old, you could not call him aged. One-eyed and crippled, still, marking the muscular arm, the expansive chest, you would have scarcely called him broken or infirm. And hence there was a certain indescribable pathos in his whole appearance, as if Fate had branded, on face and form, characters in which might be read her agencies on career and mind,—plucked an eye from intelligence shortened one limb for life's progress, yet left whim

sparkling out in the eye she had spared, and a light heart's wild spring in the limb she had maimed not.

"Come, Grandy, come," said the little girl, coaxingly; "your tea will get quite cold; your toast is ready, and here is such a nice egg—Mr. Merle says you may be sure it is new laid. Come, don't let that hateful man fret you; smile on your own Sophy—come."

"If," said Mr. Waife, in a hollow undertone,—"if I were alone in the world."

"O! Grandy."

"'I know a spot on which a bed-post grows,
And do remember where a roper lives.'

Delightful prospect, not to be indulged; for if I were in peace at one end of the rope, what would chance to my Sophy, left forlorn at the other?"

"Don't talk so, or I shall think you are sorry to have taken care of me."

"Care of thee, O child! and what care? It is thou who takest care of me. Put thy hands from my mouth; sit down, darling, there, opposite, and let us talk. Now, Sophy, thou hast often said that thou wouldst be glad to be out of this mode of life, even for one humbler and harder: think well—is it so?"

"Oh! yes, indeed, grandfather."

"No more tinsel dresses and flowery wreaths; no more applause; no more of the dear divine stage-excitement; the heroine and fairy vanished; only a little commonplace child in dingy gingham, with a purblind cripple for thy sole charge and playmate; Juliet Araminta evaporated evermore into little Sohphy!"

"It would be so nice!" answered little Sophy, laughing merrily.

"What would make it nice?" asked the Comedian, turning on her his solitary piercing eye, with curious interest in his gaze.

Sophy left her seat, and placed herself on a stool at her grandfather's knee; on that knee she clasped her tiny hands, and shaking aside her curls, looked into his face with confident fondness. Evidently these two were much more than grandfather and grandchild—they were *friends*, they were equals, they were in the habit of consulting and prattling with each other. She got at his meaning, however covert his humor; and he to the core of her heart, through its careless babble. Between you and me, Reader, I suspect that, in spite of the comedian's sagacious wrinkles, the one was as much a child as the other.

"Well," said Sophy, "I will tell you, Grandy, what would make it nice—no one would vex and affront you, we should be all by ourselves; and then, instead of those nasty lamps, and those dreadful painted creatures, we could go out and play in the fields, and gather daises; and I could run after butterflies, and when I am tired I should come here, where I am now, any time of the day, and you would tell me stories, and pretty verses, and teach me to write a little better than I do now, and make such a wise little woman of me; and if I wore gingham, but it need not be dingy, Grandy, it would be all mine, and you would be all mine too, and we'd keep a bird, and you'd teach it to sing; and oh, would it not be nice!"

"But still, Sophy, we should have to live, and we could not live upon daisies and butterflies. And I can't work now—for the matter of that, I never could work—more shame for me, but so it is. Merle says the fault is in the stars—with all my heart. But the stars will not go to the jail or the workhouse instead of me. And though they want nothing to eat, we do."

"But, Grandy you have said every day since the first walk you took after coming here, that if you had three pounds, we could get away and live by ourselves, and make a fortune!"

"A fortune!—that's a strong word; let it stand. A fortune! But still, Sophy, though we should be free of this thrice execrable Rugge, the schemes I have in my head lies remote from daisies and butterflies. We should have to dwell in towns, and exhibit!"

"On a stage, Grandy?" said Sophy, resigned, but sorrowful.

"No, not exactly—a room would do."

"And I should not wear those horrid, horrid dresses, nor mix with those horrid, horrid painted people."

"No."

"And we should be quite alone, you and I?"

"Hum! there would be a third."

"Oh, Grandy, Grandy!" cried Sophy, in a scream of shrill alarm. "I know—I know; you are thinking of joining us with the pig-faced lady!"

Mr. WAIFE (not a muscle relaxed).—"A well-spoken and pleasing gentlewoman. But

no such luck; three pounds would not buy her."

SOPHY.—"I am glad of that; I don't care so much for the Mermaid—she's dead and stuffed. But, oh" (another scream), "perhaps 'tis the Spotted Boy?"

MR. WAIFE.—"Calm your sanguine imagination; you aspire too high! But this I will tell you, that our companion, whatsoever or whosoever that companion may be, will be one you will like."

"I don't believe it," said Sophy, shaking her head. "I only like you. But who is it?"

"Alas!" said Mr. Waife, "it is no use pampering ourselves with vain hopes; the three pounds are not forthcoming. You heard what that brute Rugge said, that the gentleman who wanted to take your portrait had called on him this morning, and offered 10s. for a sitting—that is, 5s. for you, 5s. for Rugge: and Rugge thought the terms reasonable."

"But I said I would not sit."

"And when you did say it, you heard Rugge's language to me—to you. And now we must think of packing up, and be off at dawn with the rest. And," added the comedian, coloring high, "I must again parade, to boars and clowns, this mangled form; again set myself out as a spectacle of bodily infirmity—man's last degradation. And this I have come to—I!"

"No, no, Grandy, it will not last long! we will get the three pounds. We have always hoped on!—hope still! And besides, I am sure those gentlemen will come here to-night. Mr. Merle said they would, at ten o'clock. It is near ten now, and your tea cold as a stone."

She hung on his neck caressingly, kissing his furrowed brow, and leaving a tear there, and thus coaxed him till he set-to quietly at his meal; and Sophy shared it, though she had no appetite in sorrowing for him—but to keep him company; that done, she lighted his pipe with the best canaster—his sole luxury and expense; but she always contrived that he should afford it.

Mr. Waife drew a long whiff, and took a more serene view of affairs. He who doth not smoke hath either known no great griefs, or refuseth himself the softest consolation, next to that which comes from heaven. "What, softer than woman?" whispers the young reader. Young reader, woman teases as well as consoles. Woman makes half the sorrows which she boasts the privilege to soothe. Woman consoles us, it is true, while we are young and handsome! when we are old and ugly, woman snubs and scolds us. On the whole, then, woman in this scale, the weed in that, Jupiter, hang out thy balance, and weigh them both: and if thou give the preference to woman, all I can say is, the next time Juno ruffles thee—O Jupiter, try the weed!

CHAPTER VII.

The Historian, in pursuance of his stern duties, reveals to the scorn of future ages some of the occult practices which discredit the March of Light in the Nineteenth Century.

"MAY I come in?" asked the Cobbler outside the door.

"Certainly come in," said Gentleman Waife. Sophy looked wistfully at the aperture, and sighed to see that Merle was alone. She crept up to him.

"Will they not come?" she whispered.

"I hope so, pretty one; it ben't ten yet."

"Take a pipe, Merle," said Gentleman Waife, with a Grand Comedian air.

"No, thank you kindly; I just looked in to ask if I could do anything for ye, in case—in case ye must go to-morrow."

"Nothing; our luggage is small, and soon packed. Sophy has the money to discharge the meaner part of our debt to you."

"I don't value that," said the Cobbler, coloring.

"But we value your esteem," said Mr. Waife with a smile that would have become a field-marshal. "And so, Merle, you think, if I am a broken-down vagrant, it must be put to the long account of the celestial bodies!"

"Not a doubt of it," returned the Cobbler, solemnly. "I wish you would give me date and place of Sophy's birth—that's what I want—I'd take her horryscope. I'm sure she'd be lucky."

"I'd rather not, please," said Sophy, timidly.

"Rather not?—very odd. Why?"

"I don't want to know the future."

"That is odder and odder," quoth the Cob-

bler, staring; "I never heard a girl say that afore."

"Wait till she's older, Mr. Merle," said Waife; "girls don't want to know the future till they want to be married."

"Summat in that," said the Cobbler. He took up the crystal. "Have you looked into this ball, pretty one, as I bade ye?"

"Yes, two or three times."

"Ha! and what did you see?"

"My own face made very long," said Sophy —"as long as *that*"—stretching out her hands.

The Cobbler shook his head dolefully, and screwing up one eye, applied the other to the mystic ball.

"MR. WAIFE.—"Perhaps you will see if those two gentlemen are coming."

SOPHY.—"Do, do! and if they will give us three pounds!"

The COBBLER (triumphantly).—"Then you do care to know the future, after all?"

SOPHY.—"Yes, so far as that goes; but don't look any farther, pray."

The COBBLER (intent upon the ball, and speaking slowly, and in jerks).—"A mist now. Ha! an arm with a besom—sweeps all before it."

SOPHY (frightened).—"Send it away, please."

COBBLER.—It is gone. Ha! there's Rugge —looks very angry—savage, indeed."

WAIFE.—"Good sign that! proceed."

COBBLER.—"Shakes his fist; gone. Ha! a young man, boyish, dark hair."

SOPHY (clapping her hands).—"That is the young gentleman—the very young one, I mean—with the kind eyes; is he coming?—is he, is he?"

WAIFE.—"Examine his pockets! do you see there three pounds?"

COBBLER (testily).—"Don't be a interrupting. Ha! he is talking with another gentleman, bearded."

SOPHY (whispering to her grandfather).—"The old young gentleman."

COBBLER (putting down the crystal, and with great decision).—"They *are* coming here; I see'd them at the corner of the lane, by the public-house, two minutes' walk to this door." He took out a great silver-watch: "Look, Sophy, when the minute-hand gets there (or before, if they walk briskly), you will hear them knock."

Sophy clasped her hands in mute suspense, half-credulous, half-doubting; then she went and opened the room-door, and stood on the landing-place to listen. Merle approached the Comedian, and said in a low voice, "I wish for your sake she had the gift."

WAIFE.—"The gift!—the three pounds!—so do I!"

COBBLER.—"Pooh! worth a hundred times three pounds; *the* gift—the spirituous gift."

WAIFE.—"Spirituous! don't like the epithet, —smells of gin!"

COBBLER.—"Spirituous gift to see in the crystal: if she had that she might make your fortune."

WAIFE (with a sudden change of countenance).—"Ah! I never thought of that. But if she has not the gift, I could teach it her—eh?"

The COBBLER (indignantly).—"I did not think to hear this from you, Mr. Waife. Teach her—you! make her an impostor, and of the wickedest kind, inventing lies between earth and them as dwell in the seven spheres! Fie! No, if she hasn't the gift natural, let her alone; what here is not heaven-sent is devil-taught."

WAIFE (awed, but dubious).—"Then you really think you saw all that you described, in that glass egg?"

COBBLER.—"Think!—am I a liar? I spoke truth, and the proof is—there!"—Rat-tat went the knocker at the door.

"The two minutes are just up," said the Cobbler; and Cornelius Agrippa could not have said it with more wizardly effect.

"They are come, indeed," said Sophy, re-entering the room softly; "I hear their voices at the threshold."

The Cobbler passed by in silence, descended the stairs, and conducted Vance and Lionel into the Comedian's chamber; there he left them, his brow overcast. Gentleman Waife had displeased him sorely.

CHAPTER VIII.

Showing the arts by which a man, however high in the air Nature may have formed his nose, may be led by that nose, and in directions perversely opposite to those which, in following his nose, he might be supposed to take; and therefore, that nations the most liberally endowed with practical good sense, and in conceit thereof, carrying their noses the most horizontally aloof, when they come into conference with nations more skilled in dlplomacy, and more practised in "stage play," end by the surrender of the precise object which it was intended they should surrender before they laid their noses together.

We all know that Demosthenes said, Everything in oratory was acting—stage-play. Is it in oratory alone that the saying holds good? Apply it to all circumstances of life,—"stage-play, stage-play, stage-play!"—only *ars est celare artem*, conceal the art. Gleesome in soul to behold his visitors, calculating already on the three pounds to be extracted from them, seeing in that hope the crisis in his own checkered existence, Mr. Waife rose from his seat in superb *upocrisia* or stage-play, and asked, with mild dignity,—"To what am I indebted, gentlemen, for the honor of your visit?"

In spite of his nose, even Vance was taken aback. Pope says that Lord Bolingbroke had "the nobleman air." A great comedian Lord Bolingbroke surely was. But, ah, had Pope seen Gentleman Waife! Taking advantage of the impression he had created, the actor added, with the finest imaginable breeding,—"But pray be seated;" and, once seeing them seated, resumed his easy-chair, and felt himself master of the situation.

"Hum!" said Vance, recovering his self-possession, after a pause—"hum!"

"Hem!" re-echoed Gentleman Waife; and the two men eyed each other much in the same way as Admiral Napier might have eyed the fort of Cronstadt, and the fort of Cronstadt have eyed Admiral Napier.

Lionel struck in with that youthful boldness which plays the deuce with all dignified strategical science.

"You must be aware why we come, sir; Mr. Merle will have explained. My friend, a distinguished artist, wished to make a sketch, if you do not object, of this young lady's very"——"Pretty little face," quoth Vance, taking up to the discourse. "Mr. Rugge, this morning, was willing,—I understand that your grandchild refused. We are come here to see if she will be more complaisant under your own roof, or under Mr. Merle's, which, I take it, is the same thing for the present"—Sophy had sidled up to Lionel. He might not have been flattered if he knew why she preferred him to Vance. She looked on him as a boy—a fellow-child—and an instinct, moreover, told her, that more easily through him than his swrewd-looking bearded guest could she attain the object of her cupidity—"three pounds!"

"Three pounds!" whispered Sophy, with the tones of an angel, into Lionel's thrilling ear.

Mr. Waife.—"Sir, I will be frank with you." At that ominous commencement, Mr. Vance recoiled, and mechanically buttoned his trousers pocket. Mr. Waife noted the gesture with his one eye, and proceeded cautiously, feeling his way, as it were, towards the interior of the recess thus protected. "My grandchild declined your flattering proposal with my full approbation. She did not consider—neither did I—that the managerial rights of Mr. Rugge entitled him to the moiety of her face—off the stage. The Comedian paused, and with a voice, the mimic drollery of which no hoarseness could altogether mar, chanted the old line,

"'My face is my fortune, sir,' she said."

"Vance smiled—Lionel laughed; Sophy nestled still nearer to the boy.

Gentleman Waife (with pathos and dignity).—"You see before you an old man; one way of life is the same to me as another. But she—do you think Mr. Rugge's stage the right place for her?"

Vance.—"Certainly not. Why did you not introduce her to the London manager who would have engaged yourself?"

Waife could not conceal a slight change of countenance. "How do I know she would have succeeded? She had never then trod the boards. Besides, what strikes you as so good in a village show, may be poor enough in a metropolitan theatre. Gentlemen, I did my best for her—you cannot think otherwise, since she maintains me! I am no Œdipus, yet she is my Antigone."

Vance.—"You know the classics, sir. Mr. Merle said you were a scholar!—read Sophocles in his native, Greek, I presume, sir?"

MR. WAIFE.—"You jeer at the unfortunate; I am used to it."

VANCE (confused).—"I did not mean to wound you—I beg pardon. But your language and manner are not what—what one might expect to find in a—in a—Bandit persecuted by a remorseless Baron."

MR. WAIFE—"Sir, you say you are an artist. Have you heard no tales of your professional brethren—men of genius the highest, who won fame which I never did, and failed of fortune as I have done? Their own fault, perhaps,—improvidence, wild habits—ignorance of the way how to treat life and deal with their fellow-men; such fault may have been mine too. I suffer for it; no matter—I ask none to save me. You are a painter—you would place her features on your canvass—you would have her rank amongst your own creations. She may become a part of your immortality. Princes may gaze on the effigies of the innocent happy childhood, to which your colors lend imperishable glow. They may ask who and what was this fair creature? Will you answer, 'One whom I found in tinsel, and so left sure that she would die in rags!'—Save her!"

Lionel drew forth his purse, and poured its contents on the table. Vance covered them with his broad hand, and swept them into his own pocket! At that sinister action Waife felt his heart sink into his shoes; but his face was as calm as a Roman's, only he resumed his pipe with a prolonged and testy whiff.

"It is I who am to take the portrait, and it is I who will pay for it," said Vance. "I understand that you have a pressing occasion for"—"Three pounds!" muttered Sophy, sturdily, through the tears which her grandfather's pathos had drawn forth from her downcast eyes—"Three pounds—three—three."

"You shall have them. But listen; I meant only to take a sketch—I must now have a finished portrait. I cannot take this by candle-light. You must let me come here to-morrow; and yet to-morrow, I understand, you meant to leave?"

WAIFE.—"If you will generously bestow on us the sum you say, we shall not leave the village till you have completed your picture. It is Mr. Rugge and his company we will leave."

VANCE.—"And may I venture to ask what you propose to do, towards a new livelihood for yourself and your grandchild, by the help of a sum which is certainly much for *me* to pay—enormous, I might say, *quoad* me—but small for a capital whereon to set up a business?"

WAIFE.—"Excuse me if I do not answer that very natural question at present. Let me assure you that that precise sum is wanted for an investment which promises her and myself an easy existence. But to insure my scheme, I must keep it secret. Do you believe me?"

"I do!" cried Lionel; and Sophy, whom, by this time, hs had drawn upon his lap, put her arm gratefully round his neck.

"There is your money, sir, beforehand," said Vance, declining downward his betrayed and resentful nose, and depositing three sovereigns on the table.

"And how do you know," said Waife, smiling, "that I may not be off to-night with your money and your model?"

"Well," said Vance, curtly, "I think it is on the cards. Still, as John Kemble said when rebuked for too large an alms,

> 'It is not often that I do these things,
> But when I do, I do them handsomely.'"

"Well applied, and well delivered, sir," said the Comedian, "only you should put a little more emphasis on the word *do*."

"Did I not put enough? I am sure I felt it strongly; no one can feel the *do* more!"

"Waife's pliant face relaxed into a genial brightness—the *équivoque* charmed him. However, not affecting to comprehend it, he thrust back the money, and said, "No, sir,—not a shilling till the picture is completed. Nay, to relieve your mind, I will own that, had I no scruple more delicate, I would rather receive nothing till Mr. Rugge is gone. True, he has no right to any share in it. But you see before you a man who, when it comes to arguing, could never take a wrangler's degree—never get over the Ass's Bridge, sir. Plucked at it scores of times clean as a feather. But do not go yet. You came to give us money—give us what, were I rich, I should value more highly, —a little of your time. You, sir, are an artist; and you, young gentleman?" addressing Lionel.

LIONEL (coloring).—"I—am nothing as yet."

WAIFE—"You are fond of the drama, I presume, both of you? Apropos of John Kemble, you, sir, said that you have never heard him. Allow me, so far as this cracked voice can do it, to give you a faint idea of him."

"I shall be delighted," said Vance, drawing nearer to the table, and feeling more at his ease. "But since I see you smoke, may I take the liberty to light my cigar?"

"Make yourself at home," said Gentleman Waife, with the good-humor of a fatherly host. And, all the while, Lionel and Sophy were babbling together, she still upon his lap.

Waife began his imitation of John Kemble. Despite the cracked voice, it was admirable. One imitation drew on another; then succeeded anecdotes of the Stage, of the Senate, of the Bar. Waife had heard great orators, whom every one still admires for the speeches which nobody, nowadays. ever reads; he gave a lively idea of each. And then came sayings of dry humor, and odd scraps of worldly observation; and time flew on pleasantly, till the clock struck twelve, and the young guests tore themselves away.

"Merle, Merle!" cried the Comedian, when they were gone.

Merle appeared.

"We don't go to-morrow. When Rugge sends for us (as he will do at daybreak), say so. You shall lodge us a few days longer, and then—and then—my little Sophy, kiss me, kiss me! You are saved at least from those horrid painted creatures!"

"Ah, ah!" growled Merle from below, "he has got the money! Glad to hear it. But," he added, as he glanced at sundry weird and astrological symbols with which he had been diverting himself, "that's not it. The true horary question is, WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?"

CHAPTER IX.

The Historian shows that, notwithstanding the progressive spirit of the times, a Briton is not permitted, without an effort, "to progress" according to his own inclinations.

SOPHY could not sleep. At first she was too happy. Without being conscious of any degradation in her lot amongst the itinerant artists of Mr. Rugge's exhibition (how could she when her beloved and revered protector had been one of those artists for years?) yet instinctively she shrunk from their contact. Doubtless, while absorbed in some stirring part, she forgot companions, audience, all, and enjoyed what she preformed—necessarily enjoyed, for her acting was really excellent, and where no enjoyment there no excellence; but when the histrionic enthusiasm was not positively at work, she crept to her grandfather with something between loathing and terror of the "painted creatures" and her own borrowed tinsel.

But more than all, she felt acutely every indignity or affront offered to Gentleman Waife. Heaven knows, these were not few; and to escape from such a life—to be with her grandfather alone, have him all to herself to tend and to pet, to listen to, and to prattle with, seemed to her the consummation of human felicity. Ah, but should she be all alone? Just as she was lulling herself into a doze, that question seized and roused her. And then it was not happiness that kept her waking—it was what is less rare in the female breast, curiosity. Who was to he the mysterious third, to whose acquisition the three pounds were evidently to be devoted? What new face had she purchased by the loan of her own? Not the Pig-faced Lady, nor the Spotted Boy. Could it be the Norfolk Giant, or the Calf with Two Heads? Horrible idea! Monstrous phantasmagoria began to stalk before her eyes; and to charm them away, with great fervor she fell to saying her prayers—an act of devotion which she had forgotten, in her excitement, to perform before resting her head on the pillow—an omission, let us humbly hope, not noted down in very dark characters by the recording angel.

That act over, her thoughts took a more comely aspect than had been worn by the preceding phantasies, reflected Lionel's kind looks, and repeated his gentle words. "Heaven bless him!" she said with emphasis, as a supplement to the habitual prayers; and then tears gathered to her grateful eyelids, for she was one of those beings whose tears come slow from sorrow, quick from affection. And so the gray dawn found her still wakeful, and she rose, bathed her cheeks in the cold fresh water, and drew them forth with a glow like Hebe's. Dressing herself with the quiet

activity which characterized all her movements, she then opened the casement and inhaled the air. All was still in the narrow lane, the shops yet unclosed. But on the still trees behind the shops the birds were beginning to stir and chirp. Chanticleer, from some neighboring yard, rung out his brisk *reveillé*. Pleasant English summer dawn in the pleasant English country village. She stretched her graceful neck far from the casement, trying to catch a glimpse of the blue river. She had seen its majestic flow on the day they had arrived at the fair, and longed to gain its banks; then her servitude to the stage forbade her.

Now she was to be free! O joy! Now she might have her careless hours of holiday; and, forgetful of Waife's warning that their vocation must be plied in towns, she let her fancy run riot amidst visions of green fields and laughing waters, and in fond delusion gathered the daises and chased the butterflies. Changeling transferred into that lowest world of Art from the cradle of Civil Nature, her human child's heart yearned for the human child-like delights. All children love the country, the flowers, the sward, the birds, the butterflies; or if some do not, despair, O Philanthropy, of their after-lives!

She closed the window, smiling to herself; stole through the adjoining doorway, and saw that her grandfather was still asleep. Then she busied herself in putting the little sitting-room to rights, reset the table for the morning meal, watered the stocks, and finally took up the crystal and looked into it with awe, wondering why the Cobbler could see so much, and she only the distorted reflection of her own face. So interested, however, for once, did she become in the inspection of this mystic globe, that she did not notice the dawn pass into broad daylight, nor hear a voice at the door below—nor, in short, take into cognition the external world, till a heavy tread shook the floor, and then, starting, she beheld the Remorseless Baron, with a face black enough to have darkened the crystal of Dr. Dee himself.

"Ho, ho," said Mr. Rugge, in hissing accents, which had often thrilled the threepenny gallery with anticipative horror. "Rebellious, eh?—won't come? Where's your grandfather, baggage?"

Sophy let fall the crystal—a mercy it was not broken—and gazed vacantly on the Baron.

"Your vile scamp of a grandfather?"

SOPHY (with spirit).—"He is not vile. You ought to be ashamed of yourself speaking so, Mr. Rugge!"

Here, simultaneously, Mr. Waife, hastily endued in his grey dressing-gown, presented himself at the aperture of the bedroom door, and the Cobbler on the threshold of the sitting-room. The Comedian stood mute, trusting, perhaps, to the imposing effect of his attitude. The Cobbler, yielding to the impulse of untheatric man, put his head doggedly on one side, and, with both hands on his hips, said—

"Civil words to my lodgers, master, or out you go!"

The Remorseless Baron glared vindictively, first at one and then at the other; at length he strode up to to Waife, and said, with a withering grin, "I have something to say to you; shall I say it before your landlord?"

The Comedian waved his hand to the Cobbler.

"Leave us, my friend; I shall not require you. Step this way, Mr. Rugge." Rugge entered the bed-room, and Waife closed the door behind him.

"Anan," quoth the Cobbler, scratching his head. "I don't quite take your grandfather's giving in. British ground here! But your Ascendant cannot surely be in such malignant conjunction with that obstreperous tyrant as to bind you to him hand and foot. Let's see what the Crystal thinks of it. Take it up gently, and come down-stairs with me."

"Please, no; I'll stay near grandfather," said Sophy resolutely. "He shan't be left helpless with that rude man."

The Cobbler could not help smiling. "Lord love you," said he; "you have a spirit of your own, and if you were my wife, I should be afraid of you. But I won't stand here eavesdropping; mayhap your grandfather has secrets I'm not to hear; call me if I'm wanted." He descended. Sophy, with less noble disdain of eavesdropping, stood in the centre of the room, holding her breath to listen. She heard no sound—she had half a mind to put her ear to the keyhole, but that seemed even to her a a mean thing, if not absolutely required by the neccssity of the case. So there she still

stood, her head bent down, her finger raised: oh that Vance could have so painted her!

CHAPTER X.

Showing the causes why Men and Nations, when one man or Nation wishes to get for its own arbitrary purposes what the other Man or Nation does not desire to part with, are apt to ignore the mild precepts of Christianity, shock the sentiments, and upset the theories, of Peace Societies.

"AM I to understand," said Mr. Rugge, in a whisper, when Waife had drawn him to the farthest end of the inner room, with the bed-curtains between their position and the door deadening the sound of their voices—"am I to understand that, after my taking you and that child to my theatre out of charity, and at your own request, you are going to quit me without warning—French leave—is that British conduct?"

"Mr. Rugge," replied Waife, deprecatingly, "I have no engagement with you beyond an experimental trial. We were free on both sides for three months—you to dismiss us any day, we to leave you. The experiment does not please us; we thank you, and depart."

RUGGE.—"That is not the truth. I said *I* was free to dismiss you both, if the child did not suit. You, poor helpless creature, could be of no use. But I never heard you say you were to be free too. Stands to reason not! Put my engagements at a Waife's mercy! I, Lorenzo Rugge!—stuff! But I'm a just man, and a liberal man, and if you think you ought to have a higher salary, if this ungrateful proceeding is only, as I take it, a strike for wages, I will meet you. Juliet Araminta does play better than I could have supposed; and I'll conclude an engagement on good terms, as we were to have done if the experiment answered, for three years."

Waife shook his head. "You are very good, Mr. Rugge, but it is not a strike. My little girl does not like the life at any price; and since she supports me, I am bound to please her. Besides," said the actor, with a stiffer manner, "you have broken faith with me. It was fully understood that I was to appear no more on your stage; all my task was to advise with you in the performances, remodel the plays, help in the stage-management; and you took advantage of my penury, and, when I asked for a small advance, insisted on forcing these relics of what I was upon the public pity. Enough—we part. I bear no malice."

RUGGE.—"Oh, don't you? No more do I. But I am a Briton, and I have the spirit of one. You had better not make an enemy of me."

WAIFE.—"I am above the necessity of making enemies. I have an enemy ready made in myself."

Rugge placed a strong bony hand upon the cripple's arm. "I dare say you have! A bad conscience, sir. How would you like your past life looked into, and blabbed out?"

GENTLEMAN WAIFE (mournfully) — "The last four years of it have been spent in your service, Mr. Rugge.—If their record had been blabbed out for my benefit, there would not have been a dry eye in the house."

RUGGE.—"I disdain your sneer. When a scorpion nursed at my bosom sneers at me—I leave it to its own reflections. But I don't speak of the years in which that scorpion has been enjoying a salary and smoking canaster at my expense. I refer to an earlier dodge in its checkered existence. Ha, sir, you wince! I supect I can find out something about you which would—"

WAIFE (fiercely).—"Would what?"

RUGGE.—"Oh, lower your tone, sir; no bullying me. I suspect! I have good reason for suspicion; and if you sneak off in this way, and cheat me out of my property in Juliet Araminta, I will leave no stone unturned to prove what I suspect—look to it, slight man! Come I don't wish to quarrel; make it up, and" (drawing out his pocket-book) "if you want cash down, and will have an engagement in black and white for three years for Juliet Araminta, you may squeeze a good sum out of me, and go yourself where you please; you'll never be troubled by me. What I want is the girl."

All the actor laid aside, Waife growled out, "And hang me, sir, if you shall have the girl!"

At this moment Sophy opened the door wide, and entered boldly. She had heard her grandfather's voice raised, though its hoarse tones did not allow her to distinguish his words. She was alarmed for him. She came in, his guardian fairy, to protect him from the

oppressor of six feet high. Rugge's arm was raised, not indeed to strike, but rather to declaim. Sophy slid between him and her grandfather, and, clinging round the latter, flung out her own arm, the forefinger raised menacingly towards the Remorseless Baron. How you would have clapped if you had seen her so at Covent Garden! But I'll swear the child did not know she was acting. Rugge did, and was struck with admiration and regretful rage at the idea of losing her.

"Bravo!" said he, involuntarily—"Come—come, Waife, look at her—she was born for the stage. My heart swells with pride. She is my property, morally speaking; make her so legally—and hark, in your ear—fifty pounds. Take me in the humor—Golgonda opens—fifty pounds!"

"No," said the vagrant.

"Well," said Rugge, sullenly; "let her speak for herself."

"Speak, child. You don't wish to return to Mr. Rugge—and without me, too—do you, Sophy?"

"Without you, Grandy! I'd rather die first."

"You hear her; all is settled between us. You have had our services up to last night; you have paid us up to last night; and so good morning to you, Mr. Rugge."

"My dear child," said the manager, softening his voice as much as he could, "do consider. You shall be so made of without that stupid old man. You think me cross, but 'tis he who irritates me, and puts me out of temper. I'm uncommon fond of children. I had a babe of my own once—upon my honor, I had—and if it had not been for convulsions, caused by teething, I should be a father still. Supply me the place of that beloved babe. You shall have such fine dresses; all new—choose 'em yourself—minced veal and raspberry tarts for dinner every Sunday. In three years, under my care you will become a great actress, and make your fortune, and marry a lord—lords go out of their wits for great actresses—whereas, with him, what will you do? drudge, and rot, and starve; and he can't live long, and then where will *you* be? 'Tis a shame to hold her so, you idle old vagabond."

"I don't hold her," said Waife, trying to push her away. "There's something in what the man says. Choose for yourself, Sophy."

Sophy (suppressing a sob).—"How can you have the heart to talk so, Grandy? I tell you, Mr. Rugge, you are a bad man, and I hate you, and all about you—and I'll stay with grandfather—and I don't care if I do starve—he shan't!"

Mr. Rugge (clapping both hands on the crown of his hat, and striding to the door).—"William Waife, beware: 'tis done. I'm your enemy. As for you, too dear, but abandoned, infant, stay with him—you'll find out very soon who and what he is—your pride will have a fall, when—"

Waife sprang forward, despite his lameness—both his fists clenched, his one eye ablaze; his broad burly torso confronted and daunted the stormy manager. Taller and younger though Rugge was, he cowed before the cripple he had so long taunted and humbled. The words stood arrested on his tongue. "Leave the room instantly!" thundered the actor, in a voice no longer broken. "Blacken my name before that child by one word, and I will dash the next down your throat."

Rugge rushed to the door—and keeping it ajar between Waife and himself, he then thrust in his head, hissing forth, "Fly, caitiff, fly! my revenge shall track your secret, and place you in my power. Juliet Araminta shall yet be mine." With these awful words the Remorseless Baron cleared the stairs in two bounds, and was out of the house.

Waife smiled contemptuously. But as the street-door clanged on the form of the angry manager, the color faded from the old man's face. Exhausted by the excitement he had gone through, he sank on a chair, and, with one quick gasp as for breath, fainted away.

CHAPTER XI.

Progress of the Fine Arts.—Biographical Anecdotes.—Fluctuations in the Value of Money.—Speculative Tendencies of the Time.

Whatever the shock which the brutality of the Remorseless Baron inflicted on the nervous system of the persecuted but triumphant Bandit, it had certainly subsided by the time Vance and Lionel entered Waife's apartment, for they found grandfather and grandchild seated near the open window, at the corner of

the table (on which they had made room for their operations by the removal of the carved cocoa-nut, the crystal egg, and the two flower-pots), eagerly engaged, with many a silvery laugh from the lips of Sophy, in the game of dominoes.

Mr. Waife had been devoting himself, for the last hour and more, to the instruction of Sophy in the mysteries of that intellectual amusement; and such pains did he take, and so impressive were his exhortations, that his happy pupil could not help thinking to herself that *this* was the new art upon which Waife depended for their future livelihood. She sprang up, however, at the entrance of the visitors, her face beaming with grateful smiles; and, running to Lionel, and taking him by the hand, while she curtsied with more respect to Vance, she exclaimed,—"We are free! thanks to you—thanks to you both! He is gone! Mr. Rugge is gone."

"So I saw on passing the green; stage and all," said Vance, while Lionel kissed the child and pressed her to his side. It is astonishing how paternal he felt—how much she had crept into his heart.

"Pray, sir," asked Sophy, timidly, glancing to Vance, "has the Norfolk Giant gone too?"

VANCE.—"I fancy so—all the shows were either gone or going."

SOPHY.—"The Calf with Two Heads?"

VANCE.—"Do you regret it?"

SOPHY.—"Oh, dear, no."

Waife, who, after a profound bow, and a cheery "Good day, gentlemen," had hitherto remained silent, putting away the dominoes, now said—"I suppose, sir, you would like at once to begin your sketch?"

VANCE.—"Yes; I have brought all my tools—see, even the canvas. I wish it were larger, but if is all I have with me of that material—'tis already stretched—just let me arrange the light."

WAIFE.—"If you don't want me, gentlemen, I will take the air for half an hour or so. In fact, I may now feel free to look after my investment."

SOPHY (whispering Lionel).—"You are *sure* the Calf has gone as well as the Norfolk Giant?"

Lionel wonderingly replied that he thought so; and Waife disappeared into his room, whence he soon emerged, having doffed his dressing-gown for a black coat, by no means threadbare, and well brushed. Hat, stick, and gloves in hand, he really seemed respectable—more than respectable—gentleman Waife every inch of him; and saying, "Look your best, Sophy, and sit still, if you can," nodded pleasantly to the three, and hobbled down the stairs. Sophy—whom Vance had just settled into a chair, with her head bent partially down (three quarters), as the artist had released

"The loose train of her amber-dropping hair,"

and was contemplating aspect and position with a painter's meditative eye—started up, to his great discomposure, and rushed to the window. She returned to her seat with her mind much relieved. Waife was walking in an opposite direction to that which led towards the whilome quarters of the Norfolk Giant and the Two-headed Calf.

"Come, come," said Vance, impatiently, "you have broken an idea in half. I beg you will not stir till I have placed you—and then, if all else of you be still, you may exercise your tongue. I give you leave to talk."

SOPHY (penitentially).—"I am so sorry—I beg pardon. Will that do, sir?"

VANCE.—"Head a little more to the right—so, Titania watching Bottom asleep. Will you lie on the floor, Lionel, and do Bottom?"

LIONEL (indignantly).—"Bottom! Have I an ass's head?"

VANCE.—Immaterial! I can easily imagine that you have one. I want merely an outline of figure—something sprawling and ungainly."

LIONEL (sulkily).—"Much obliged to you—imagine that too."

VANCE.—"Don't be so disobliging. It is necessary that she should look fondly at something—expression in the eye."

Lionel at once reclined himself incumbent in a position as little sprawling and ungainly as he could well contrive.

VANCE.—"Fancy, Miss Sophy, that this young gentleman is very dear to you. Have you got a brother?"

SOPHY.—"Ah, no, sir."

VANCE.—"Hum. But you have, or have had, a doll?"

SOPHY.—"Oh, yes; grandfather gave me one."

VANCE.—"And you were fond of that doll?"

SOPHY.—"Very."

VANCE.—"Fancy that young gentleman is your doll grown big—that it is asleep, and you are watching that no one hurts it—Mr. Rugge, for instance. Throw your whole soul into that thought—love for doll, apprehension of Rugge. Lionel, keep still and shut your eyes—do."

LIONEL (grumbling).—"I did not come here to be made a doll of."

VANCE.—"Coax him to be quiet, Miss Sophy, and sleep peaceably, or I shall do him a mischief. I can be a Rugge too, if I am put out."

SOPHY (in the softest tones).—"Do try and sleep, sir—shall I get you a pillow?"

LIONEL.—"No, thank you—I'm very comfortable now" (settling his head upon his arm, and after one upward glance towards Sophy, the lids closed reluctantly over his softened eyes). A ray of sunshine came aslant through the half-shut window, and played along the boy's clustering hair and smooth pale cheek. Sophy's gaze rested on him most benignly.

"Just so," said Vance; "and now be silent till I have got the attitude and fixed the look."

The artist sketched away rapidly with a bold practised hand, and all was silent for about half an hour, when he said, "You may get up, Lionel; I have done with you for the present."

SOPHY.—"And me, too—may I see?"

VANCE.—"No; but you may talk now. So you had a doll? What has become of it?"

SOPHY.—"I left it behind, sir. Grandfather thought it would distract me from attending to his lessons, and learning my part."

VANCE.—"You love your grandfather more than the doll?'

SOPHY.—"Oh! a thousand million million times more."

VANCE.—"He brought you up, I suppose? Have you no father—no mother?"

SOPHY.—"I have only grandfather."

LIONEL.—"Have you always lived with him?"

SOPHY.—"Dear me, no; I was with Mrs. Crane till grandfather came from abroad, and took me away, and put me with some very kind people; and then, when grandfather had that bad accident, I came to stay with him, and we have been together ever since."

LIONEL.—"Was Mrs. Crane no relation of yours?"

SOPHY.—"No, I suppose not, for she was not kind—I was so miserable; but don't talk of it—I forget that now. I only wish to remember from the time grandfather took me in his lap, and told me to be a good child, and love him; and I have been happy ever since."

"You *are* a dear good child," said Lionel, emphatically, "and I wish I had you for my sister."

VANCE.—"When your grandfather has received from me that exorbitant—not that I grudge it—sum, I should like to ask, What will he do with it? As he said it was a secret, I must not pump you."

SOPHY.—"What will he do with it? I should like to know too, sir; but whatever it is, I don't care, so long as I and grandfather are together."

Here Waife re-entered. "Well, how goes on the picture?"

VANCE.—"Tolerably for the first sitting; I require two more."

WAIFE.—"Certainly; only—only" (he drew aside Vance, and whispered), "only the day after to-morrow, I fear I *shall* want the money. It is an occasion that never will occur again—I would seize it."

VANCE.—"Take the money now."

WAIFE.—"Well, thank you, sir; you are sure now that we shall not run away; and I accept your kindness; it will make all safe."

Vance, with surprising alacrity, slipped the sovereigns into the old man's hand; for, truth to say, though thrifty, the Artist was really generous. His organ of caution was large, but that of acquisitiveness moderate. Moreover, in those moments, when his soul expanded with his art, he was insensibly less alive to the value of money. And strange it is that, though states strive to fix for that commodity the most abiding standards, yet the value of money to the individual who regards it, shifts and fluctuates, goes up and down half-a-dozen times a-day. For my part, I honestly declare that there are hours in the twenty-four—such, for instance, as that just before breakfast, or that succeeding a page of this History in which I have been put out of temper with my performance and myself, when any one in want of five shillings at my disposal would find my value of that sum put it quite out of his reach; while at other times—just after dinner, for instance, or when I have

effected what seems to me a happy stroke, or a good bit of color, in this historical composition—the value of those five shillings is so much depreciated that I might be—I think so, at least—I might be almost tempted to give them away for nothing." Under some such mysterious influences in the money-market, Vance, therefore, felt not the loss of his three soverigns; and, returning to his easel, drove away Lionel and Sophy, who had taken that opportunity to gaze on the canvass.

"Don't do her justice at all," quoth Lionel: "all the features exaggerated."

"And you pretend to paint!" returned Vance, in great scorn, and throwing a cloth over his canvass. "To-morrow, Mr. Waife, the same hour. Now Lionel, get your hat, and come away."

Vance carried off the canvass, and Lionel followed slowly. Sophy gazed at their departing forms from the open window; Waife stumped about the room, rubbing his hands, —"He'll do, he'll do; I always thought so." Sophy turned,—"Who'll do?—the young gentlemen? Do what?"

WAIFE.—"The young gentleman?—as if I was thinking of him. Our new companion—I have been with him this last hour. Wonderful natural gifts."

SOPHY (ruefully).—"It is alive, then?"

WAIFE.—"Alive! yes, I should think so."

SOPHY (half-crying).—"I'm very sorry; I know I shall hate it."

WAIFE.—"Tut, darling—get me my pipe—I'm happy."

SOPHY (cutting short her fit of ill-humor).—"Are you?—then I am, and I will not hate it."

CHAPTER XII.

In which it is shown that a man does this or declines to do that for reasons best known to himself—a reserve which is extremely conducive to the social interests of a community; since the conjecture into the origin and nature of those reasons stimulates the inquiring faculties, and furnishes the staple of modern conversation. And as it is not to be denied that, if their neighbors left them nothing to guess at, three-fourths of civilized humankind, male or female, would have nothing to talk about; so we cannot too gratefully encourage that needful curiosity, termed by the inconsiderate tittle-tattle or scandal, which saves the vast majority of our species from being reduced to the degraded condition of dumb animals.

THE next day the sitting was renewed; but Waife did not go out, and the conversation was a little more restrained; or rather, Waife had the larger share in it. The Comedian, when he pleased, could certainly be very entertaining. It was not so much in what he said, as his manner of saying it. He was a strange combination of sudden extremes, at one while on a tone of easy but not undignified familiarity with his visitors, as if their equal in position, their superior in years; then abruptly, humble, deprecating, almost obsequious, almost servile; and then, again, jerked, as it were, into pride and stiffness, falling back, as if the effort were impossible, into meek dejection. Still the prevalent character of the man's mood and talk was social, quaint, cheerful. Evidently he was, by original temperament, a droll and joyous humourist, with high animal spirits; and, withal, an infantine simplicity at times, like the clever man who never learns the world, and is always taken in.

A circumstance, trifling in itself, but suggestive of speculation either as to the character or antecedent circumstances of Gentleman Waife, did not escape Vance's observation. Since his rupture with Mr. Rugge, there was a considerable amelioration in that affection of the trachea, which, while his engagement with Rugge lasted, had rendered the comedian's dramatic talents unavailable on the stage. He now expressed himself without the pathetic hoarseness or cavernous wheeze which had previously thrown a wet blanket over his efforts at discourse. But Vance put no very stern construction on the dissimulation which this change seemed to denote. Since Waife was still one-eyed and a cripple, he might very excusably shrink from reappearance on the stage, and affect a third infirmity to save his pride from the exhibition of the two infirmities that were genuine.

That which most puzzled Vance was that which had most puzzled the Cobbler,—What could the man once have been?—how fallen so low?—for fall it was, that was clear. The painter, though not himself of patrician extraction, had been much in the best society. He had been a petted favorite in great houses. He had travelled. He had seen the world. He had the habits and instincts of good society.

Now, in what the French term the *beau monde*, there are little traits that reveal those

who have entered it,—certain tricks of phrase, certain modes of expression—even the pronunciation of familiar words, even the modulation of an accent. A man of the most refined bearing may not have these peculiarities; a man, otherwise coarse and brusque in his manner, may. The slang of the *beau monde* is quite apart from the code of high-breeding. Now and then, something in Waife's talk seemed to show that he had lighted on that beau-world; now and then, that something wholly vanished. So that Vance might have said, "He has been admitted there, not inhabited it."

Yet Vance could not feel sure, after all; comedians are such takes in. But was the man, by the profession of his earlier life, a comedian? Vance asked the question adroitly.

"You must have taken to the stage young?" said he.

"The stage!" said Waife; "if you mean the public stage—no. I have acted pretty often in youth, even in childhood, to amuse others, never professionally to support myself, till Mr. Rugge civilly engaged me four years ago."

"Is it possible—with your excellent education! But pardon me; I have hinted my surprise at your late vocation before, and it displeased you."

"Displeased me!" said Waife, with an abject, depressed manner; "I hope I said nothing that would have misbecome a poor broken vagabond like me. I am no prince in disguise—a good-for-nothing varlet who should be too grateful to have something to keep himself from a dung-hill."

LIONEL.—"Don't talk so. And but for your accident you might now be the great attraction on the Metropolitan Stage. Who does not respect a really fine actor?"

WAIFE (gloomily). — "The Metropolitan Stage! I was talked into it; I am glad even of the accident that saved me—say no more of that, no more of that. But I have spoiled your sitting: Sophy, you see, has left her chair."

"I have done for to-day," said Vance; "to-morrow, and my task is ended."

Lionel came up to Vance and whispered him; the painter, after a pause, nodded silently, and then said to Waife—

"We are going to enjoy the fine weather on the Thames (after I have put away these things), and shall return to our inn—not far hence—to sup, at eight o'clock. Supper is our principal meal—we rarely spoil our days by the ceremonial of a formal dinner. Will you do us the favor to sup with us?" Our host has a wonderful whisky, which, when raw, is Glenlivat, but, refined into toddy, is nectar. Bring your pipe, and let us hear John Kemble again."

Waife's face lighted up. "You are most kind; nothing I should like so much. But—" and the light fled, the face darkened—"but no; I cannot—you don't know—that is—I—I have made a vow to myself to decline all such temptations. I humbly beg you'll excuse me."

VANCE.—"Temptations! of what kind—the whisky-toddy?"

WAIFE (puffing away a sigh).—"Ah, yes; whisky-toddy if you please. Perhaps I once loved a glass too well, and could not resist a glass too much now; and if I once broke the rule, and became a tippler, what would happen to Juliet Araminta? For her sake don't press me."

"Oh do go, Grandy; he never drinks—never anything stronger than tea, I assure you, sir; it can't be that."

"It is, silly child, and nothing else," said Waife, positively;—drawing himself up, "Excuse me."

Lionel began brushing his hat with his sleeve, and his face worked; at last he said, "Well, sir, then may I ask another favor? Mr. Vance and I are going to-morrow, after the sitting, to see Hampton Court; we have kept that excursion to the last before leaving these parts. Would you and little Sophy come with us in the boat? we will have no whisky-toddy, and we will bring you both safe home."

WAIFE.—"What — I—what I! You are very young, sir—a gentleman born and bred, I'll swear; and you to be seen, perhaps by some of your friends or family, with an old vagrant like me, in the Queen's palace—the public gardens! I should be the vilest wretch if I took such advantage of your goodness. 'Pretty company,' they would say, 'you had got into.' With me—with me! Don't be alarmed, Mr. Vance—not to be thought of."

The young men were deeply affected.

"I can't accept that reason," said Lionel, tremulously. "Though I must not presume to derange your habits. But *she* may go with

us, mayn't she? We'll take care of her, and she is dressed so plainly and neatly, and looks such a little lady" (turning to Vance).

"Yes, let her come with us," said the artist benevolently; though he by no means shared in Lionel's enthusiastic desire for her company. He thought she would be greatly in their way.

"Heaven bless you both!" answered Waife; "and she wants a holiday; she shall have it."

"I'd rather stay with you, Grandy; you'll be so lone."

"No, I wish to be out all to-morrow—the investment! I shall not be alone—making friends with our future companion, Sophy."

"And can do without me already?—heigh-ho!"

VANCE.—"So that's settled; good-by to you.

CHAPTER XIII.

Inspiring effect of the Fine Arts: the Vulgar are moved by their exhibition into generous impulses and flights of fancy, checked by the ungracious severities of their superiors, as exemplified in the instance of Cobbler Merle and his Servant-of-All-Work.

THE next day, perhaps with the idea of removing all scruple from Sophy's mind, Waife had already gone after his investment when the friends arrived. Sophy at first was dull and dispirited, but by degrees she brightened up; and when, the sitting over and the picture done (save such final touches as Vance reserved for solitary study), she was permitted to gaze at her own effigy, she burst into exclamations of frank delight. "Am I like that! is it possible? Oh, how beautiful! Mr. Merle, Mr. Merle, Mr. Merle!" and running out of the room before Vance could stop her, she returned with the Cobbler, followed, too, by a thin gaunt girl, whom he pompously called his housekeeper, but who, in sober-truth, was servant-of-all-work. Wife he had none—his horoscope, he said, having Saturn in square to the Seventh House, forbade him to venture upon matrimony. All gathered round the picture; all admired, and with justice—it was a *chef d'œuvre*. Vance in his maturest day never painted more charmingly. The three pounds proved to be the best outlay of capital he had ever made. Pleased with his work, he was pleased even with that unsophisticated applause.

"You must have Mercury and Venus very strongly aspected," quoth the Cobbler; "and if you have the Dragon's Head in the Tenth House, you may count on being much talked of after you are dead."

"After I am dead!—sinister omen!" said Vance, discomposed. "I have no faith in artists who count of being talked of after they are dead. Never knew a dauber who did not! But stand back—time flies—tie up your hair—put on your bonnet, Titania. You have a shawl?—not tinsel, I hope!—quieter the better. You stay and see to her, Lionel."

Said the gaunt servant-of-all-work to Mr. Merle—"I'd let the gentleman paint me, if he likes it—shall I tell him, master?"

"Go back to the bacon, foolish woman. Why, he gave £3 for her likeness, 'cause of her Benefics! But you'd have to give him three years' wages afore he'd look you straight in the face, 'cause, you see, your Aspects are crooked. And," added the Cobbler, philosophizing, "when the Malefics are dead agin a girl's mug, man is so constituted by natur that he can't take to that mug unless it has a gold handle. Don't fret, 'tis not your fault: born under Scorpio—coarse-limbed—dull complexion—and the Head of the Dragon, aspected of Infortunes in all your Angles."

CHAPTER XIV.

The Historian takes advantage of the summer hours vouchsafed to the present life of Mr. Waife's grandchild, in order to throw a few gleams of light on her past.—He leads her into the Palace of our Kings, and moralizes thereon; and, entering the Royal Gardens, shows the uncertainty of Human Events, and the insecurity of British Laws, by the abrupt seizure and constrained deportation of an innocent and unforeboding Englishman.

SUCH a glorious afternoon! The capricious English summer was so kind that day to the child and her new friends! When Sophy's small foot once trod the sward, had she been really Queen of the Green People, sward and footstep could not more joyously have met together' The grasshopper bounded, in fearless trust, upon the hem of her frock; she threw herself down on the grass, and caught him,

but, oh, so tenderly; and the gay insect, dear to poet and fairy, seemed to look at her from that quaint sharp face of his with sagacious recognition, resting calmly on the palm of her pretty hand; then when he sprang off, little mothlike butterflies peculiar to the margins of running waters quivered up from the herbage, fluttering round her. And there, in front, lay the Thames, glittering through the willows, Vance getting ready the boat, Lionel seated by her side, a child like herself, his pride of incipient manhood all forgotten; happy in her glee—she loving him for the joy she felt—and blending his image evermore in her remembrance with her first summer holiday—with sunny beams—glistening leaves—warbling birds—fairy wings—sparkling waves.

Oh, to live so in a child's heart—innocent, blessed, angel-like—better, better than the troubled reflection upon woman's later thoughts; better than that mournful illusion, over which tears so bitter are daily shed—better than First Love! They entered the boat. Sophy had never, to the best of her recollection, been in a boat before. All was new to her; the lifelike speed of the little vessel—that world of cool green weeds, with the fish darting to and fro—the musical chime of oars—those distant stately swans. She was silent now—her heart was very full.

"What are you thinking of, Sophy?" asked Lionel, resting on the oar.

"Thinking!—I was not thinking."

"What then?"

"I don't know—feeling, I suppose."

"Feeling what?"

"As if between sleeping and waking—as the water perhaps feels, with the sunlight on it!"

"Poetical," said Vance, who, somewhat of a poet himself, naturally sneered at poetical tendencies in others. "But not so bad in its way. Ah, have I hurt your vanity? there are tears in your eyes."

"No, sir," said Sophy, falteringly. "But I *was* thinking then."

"Ah," said the artist, "that's the worst of it; after feeling ever comes thought—what was yours?"

"I was sorry poor grandfather was not here, that's all."

"It was not our fault; we pressed him cordially," said Lionel.

"You did indeed, sir—thank you! And I don't know why he refused you." The young men exchanged compassionate glances.

Lionel then sought to make her talk of her past life—tell him more of Mrs. Crane. Who and what was she?

Sophy could not, or would not, tell. The remembrances were painful; she had evidently tried to forget them. And the people with whom Waife had placed her, and who had been kind?

The Misses Burton—and they kept a day-school, and taught Sophy to read, write, and cipher. They lived near London, in a lane opening on a great common, with a green rail before the house, and had a good many pupils, and kept a tortoise-shell cat and a canary. Not much to enlighten her listener did Sophy impart here.

And now they neared that stately palace, rich in associations of storm and splendor. The grand Cardinal—the iron-clad Protector; Dutch William of the immortal memory, whom we try so hard to like, and, in spite of the great Whig historian, that Titian of English prose, can only frigidly respect. Hard task for us Britons to like a Dutchman who dethrones his father-in-law, and drinks schnaps. Prejudice certainly; but so it is. Harder still to like Dutch William's unfilial Frau! Like Queen Mary! I could as soon like Queen Goneril! Romance flies from the prosperous phlegmatic Æneas; flies from his plump Lavinia, his "fidus Achates," Bentinck; flies to follow the poor deserted fugitive Stuart, with all his sins upon his head. Kings have no rights divine, except when deposed and fallen; they are then invested with the awe that belongs to each solemn image of mortal vicissitude—Vicissitude that startles the Epicurean, *insanientis sapientiæ consultus*," and strikes from his careless lyre the notes that attest a God! Some proud shadow chases another from the throne of Cyrus, and Horace hears in the thunder the rush of Diespiter, and identifies Providence with the fortune that snatches off the diadem in her whirring swoop.* But

* "———— Valet ima summis
Mutare, et insignem attenuat Deus,
Obscura promens; hinc apicem rapax
Fortuna cum stridore acuto
Sustulit,—hic posuisse gaudet."
—HORAT. *Carm.*, lib. i. xxxiv.

The concluding allusion is evidently to the Parthian

fronts discrowned take a new majesty to generous natures;—in all sleek prosperity there is something commonplace—in all grand adversity, something royal.

The boat shot to the shore; the young people landed, and entered the arch of the desolate palace. They gazed on the great hall and the presence-chamber, and the long suite of rooms, with faded portraits—Vance as an artist, Lionel as an enthusiastic well-read boy, Sophy as a wondering, bewildered, ignorant child. And then they emerged into the noble garden, with its regal trees. Groups were there of well-dressed persons. Vance heard himself called by name. He had forgotten the London world—forgotten, amidst his midsummer ramblings, that the London season was still ablaze—and there, stragglers from the great Focus, fine people, with languid tones and artificial jaded smiles, caught him in his wanderer's dress, and walking side by side with the infant wonder of Mr. Rugge's show, exquisitely neat indeed, but still in a colored print, of a pattern familiar to his observant eye in the windows of many a shop lavish of tickets, and inviting you to come in by the assurance that it is "selling-off." The artist stopped, colored, bowed, answered the listless questions put to him with shy haste; he then attempted to escape—they would not let him.

"You *must* come back and dine with us at the Star and Garter," said Lady Selina Vipont. "A pleasant party—you know most of them—the Dudley Slowes, dear old Lady Frost, those pretty Ladies Prymme, Janet and Wilhelmina."

"We can't let you off," said, sleepily, Mr. Crampe, a fashionable wit, who rarely made more than one bon-mot in the twenty-four hours, and spent the rest of his time in a torpid state.

VANCE.—"Really you are too kind, but I am not even dressed for—"

LADY SELINA.—"So charmingly dressed—so picturesque! Besides, what matters? Every one knows who you are. Where on earth have you been?"

VANCE.—"Rambling about, taking sketches."

LADY SELINA (directing her eye-glass towards Lionel and Sophy, who stood aloof).—"But your companions, your brother?—and that pretty little girl—your sister, I suppose?"

VANCE (shuddering).—No, not relations. I took charge of the boy—clever young fellow; and the little girl is—"

LADY SELINA.—"Yes. The little girl is—"

VANCE.—"A little girl, as you see; and very pretty, as you say,—subject for a picture."

LADY SELINA (indifferently).—"Oh, let the children go and amuse themselves somewhere. Now we have found you—positively you are our prisoner."

Lady Selina Vipont was one of the queens of London; she had with her that habit of command natural to such royalties. Frank Vance was no tuft-hunter, but once under social influences, they had their effect on him, as on most men who are blest with noses in the air. Those great ladies, it is true, never bought his pictures, but they gave him the position which induced others to buy them. Vance loved his art; his art needed its career. Its career was certainly brightened and quickened by the help of rank and fashion.

In short, Lady Selina triumphed, and the painter stepped back to Lionel. "I must go to Richmond with these people. I know you'll excuse me. I shall be back to-night somehow. By the by, as you are going to the post-office here for the letter you expect from your mother, ask for my letters too. You will take care of little Sophy, and (in a whisper) hurry her out of the garden, or that Grand Mogul feminine, Lady Selina, whose condescension would crush the Andes, will be stopping her as my *protégée*, falling in raptures with that horrid colored print, saying, 'Dear, what pretty sprigs! where can such things be got?' and learning, perhaps, how Frank Vance saved the Bandit's Child from the Remorseless Baron. 'Tis your turn now. Save your friend. The Baron was a lamb compared to a fine lady." He pressed Lionel's unresponding hand, and was off to join the polite merrymaking of the Frosts, Slowes, and Prymmes.

Lionel's pride ran up to the fever-heat of its thermometer;—more roused, though, on behalf of the unconscious Sophy than himself.

"Let us come into the town, lady-bird, and

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revolutions, and the changeful fate of Phraastes IV.; and I do not feel sure that the preceding lines upon the phenomenon of the thunder in a serene sky have not a latent and half allegorical meaning dimly applicable, throughout, to the historical reference at the close.

choose a doll. You may have one now, without fear of distracting you from—what I hate to think you ever stopped to perform."

As Lionel, his crest erect, and nostril dilated, and holding Sophy firmly by the hand, took his way out from the gardens, he was obliged to pass the patrician party, of whom Vance now made one.

His countenance and air, as he swept by, struck them all, especially Lady Selina. "A very distinguished-looking boy," said she. "What a fine face! Who did you say he was, Mr. Vance?"

VANCE.—"His name is Haughton—Lionel Haughton."

LADY SELINA.—"Haughton! Haughton! Any relation to poor dear Captain Haughton—Charlie Haughton, as he was generally called?"

Vance, knowing little more of his young friend's parentage than that his mother let lodgings, at which, once domiciliated himself, he had made the boy's acquaintance, and that she enjoyed the pension of a captain's widow, replied carelessly—

"His father was a captain, but I don't know whether he was a Charlie."

MR. CRAMPE (the Wit).—"Charlies are extinct! I have the last in a fossil,—box and all?"

General laugh. Wit shut up again.

LADY SELINA.—"He has a great look of Charlie Haughton. Do you know if he is connected with that extraordinary man, Mr. Darrell?"

VANCE.—"Upon my word, I do not. What Mr. Darrell do you mean?"

Lady Selina with one of those sublime looks of celestial pity with which personages in the great world forgive ignorance of names and genealogies in those not born within its orbit, replied, "Oh, to be sure; it is not exactly in the way of your delightful art to know Mr. Darrell, one of the first men in Parliament, a connection of mine."

LADY FROST (nippingly).—"You mean Guy Darrell, the lawyer."

LADY SELINA.—"Lawyer—true, now I think of it; he was a lawyer. But his chief fame was in the House of Commons. All parties agreed that he might have commanded any station; but he was too rich, perhaps, to care sufficiently about office. At all events, Parliament was dissolved when he was at the height of his reputation, and he refused to be re-elected."

ONE SIR GREGORY STOLLHEAD (a member of the House of Commons, young, wealthy, a constant attendant, of great promise, with speeches that were filled with facts, and emptied the benches).—"I have heard of him. Before my time; lawyers not much weight in in the House now.'.

LADY SELINA.—"I am told that Mr. Darrell did not speak like a lawyer. But his career is over—lives in the country, and sees nobody—a thousand pities—a connection of mine, too—great loss to the country. Ask your young friend, Mr. Vance, if Mr. Darrell is not his relation. I hope so, for his sake. Now that our party is in power, Mr. Darrell could command anything for others, though he has ceased to act with us. Our party is not forgetful of talent."

LADY FROST (with icy crispness).—"I should think not; it has so little of a that kind to remember."

SIR GREGORY.—"Talent is not wanted in the House of Commons now—don't go down, in fact. Business assembly."

LADY SELINA (suppressing a yawn).—"Beautiful day! We had better think of going back to Richmond."

General assent, and slow retreat.

CHAPTER XV.

The Historian records the attachment to public business which distinguishes the British Legislator.—Touching instance of the regret which ever in patriotic bosoms attends the neglect of a public duty.

FROM the dusty height of a rumble-tumbie affixed to Lady Selina Vipont's barouche, and by the animated side of Sir Gregory Stollhead, Vance caught sight of Lionel and Sophy at a corner of the spacious green near the Palace. He sighed, he envied them. He thought of the boat, the water, the honeysuckle arbor at the little inn—pleasures he had denied himself—pleasures all in his own way. They seemed still more alluring by contrast with the prospect before him; formal dinner at the Star and Garter, with titled Prymmes, Slowes, and Frosts, a couple of guineas a-head, includ-

ing light wines, which he did not drink, and the expense of a chaise back by himself. But such are life and its social duties—such, above all, ambition and a career. Who, that would leave a name on his tombstone, can say to his own heart, "Perish Stars and Garters; my existence shall pass from day to day in honeysuckle arbors!"

Sir Gregory Stollhead interrupted Vance's reverie by an impassioned sneeze—"Dreadful smell of hay!" said the legislator, with watery eyes. "Are you subject to the hay fever? I am! A—tisha—tisha—tisha (sneezing)—country frightfully unwholesome at this time of year. And to think that I ought now to be in the House—in my committee-rooom—no smell of hay there—most important committee."

VANCE (rousing himself).—"Ah—on what?"

SIR GREGORY (regretfully).—"Sewers."

CHAPTER XVI.

Signs of an impending revolution, which, like all revolutions, seems to come of a sudden, though its causes have long been at work; and to go off in a tantrum, though its effects must run on to the end of a history.

LIONEL could not find in the toy-shops of the village a doll good enough to satisfy his liberal inclinations, but he bought one which amply contented the humbler aspirations of Sophy. He then strolled to the post-office. There were several letters for Vance—one for himself in his mother's handwriting. He delayed opening it for the moment. The day was far advanced—Sophy must be hungry. In vain she declared she was not. They passed by a fruiterer's stall. The strawberries and cherries were temptingly fresh—the sun still very powerful. At the back of the fruiterer's was a small garden, or rather orchard, smiling cool through the open door—little tables laid out there. The good woman who kept the shop was accustomed to the wants and tastes of humble metropolitan visitors.

But the garden was luckily now empty—it was before the usual hour for tea-parties; so the young folks had the pleasantest table under an apple-tree, and the choice of the freshest fruit. Milk and cakes were added to the fare. It was a banquet, in Sophy's eyes, worthy that happy day. And when Lionel had finished his share of the feast, eating fast, as spirited, impatient boys formed to push on in life and spoil their digestion are apt to do; and while Sophy was still lingering over the last of the strawberries, he threw himself back on his chair, and drew forth his letter. Lionel was extremely fond of his mother, but her letters were not often those which a boy is over eager to read. It is not all mothers who understand what boys are—their quick susceptibilities, their precious manliness, all their mystical ways and oddities. A letter from Mrs. Haughton generally somewhat fretted and irritated Lionel's high-strung nerves, and he had instinctively put off the task of reading the one he held, till satisfied hunger and cool-breathing shawdows, and rest from the dusty road, had lent their soothing aid to his undeveloped philosophy.

He broke the seal slowly; another letter was enclosed within. At the first few words his countenance changed; he uttered a slight exclamation, read on eagerly; then, before concluding his mother's epistle, hastily tore open that which it had contained, ran his eye over its contents, and, dropping both letters on the turf below. rested his face on his hand in agitated thought. Thus ran his mother's letter:—

"MY DEAR BOY,

"How could you! Do it slyly!! Unknown to your own mother!!! I could not believe it of you!!!! Take advantage of my confidence in showing you the letters of your father's cousin, to write to himself—*clandestinely!*—you, who I thought had such an open character, and who ought to appreciate mine. Every one who knows me says I am a woman in ten thousand—not for beauty and talent (though I have had my admirers for them too), but for GOODNESS! As a wife and mother, I may say I have been exemplary. I had sore trials with the dear captain—and IMMENSE temptations. But he said on his death-bed, 'Jessica, you are an angel.' And I have had offers since—IMMENSE offers—but I devoted myself to my child, as you know. And what I have put up with, letting the first floor, nobody can tell; and only a widow's pension—going before a magistrate to get it paid! And to think my own child, for whom I have borne so much, should behave so cruelly to me! Clandestine! 'tis *that* which stabs me. Mrs. Inman found me crying, and said, 'What is the matter?—you who are such an angel, crying like a baby!' And I could not help saying, ''Tis the serpent's tooth, Mrs. I.' What you wrote to your benefactor (and I *had* hoped patron) I don't care to guess; something very rude and imprudent it must be, judging by the few lines he addressed to me. I don't mind copying them for you to read. All *my* acts are above board—as often and often Captain H. used to say,

'Your heart is in a glass case, Jessica;' and so it is! *but my son keeps his under lock and key.*

"'Madam' (this is what *he* writes to me), 'your son has thought fit to infringe the condition upon which I agreed to assist you on his behalf. I enclose a reply to himself, which I beg you will give to his own hands without breaking the seal. Since it did not seem to you indiscreet to communicate to a boy of his years letters written solely to yourself, you cannot blame me if I take your implied estimate of his capacity to judge for himself of the nature of a correspondence, and of the views and temper of, madam, your very obedient servant.' And that's all, to me. I send his letter to you—seal unbroken. I conclude he has done with you for ever, and *your* CAREER *is lost!* But if it be so, oh, my poor, poor child! at that thought I have not the heart to scold you farther. If it be so, come home to me, and I'll work and slave for you, and you shall keep up your head and be a gentleman still, as you are, every inch of you. Don't mind what I've said at the beginning, dear—don't! you know I'm hasty, and I was *hurt*. But you could not mean to be sly and underhand—'twas only your high spirit—and it was *my* fault; I should not have shown you the letters. I hope you are well, and have quite lost that nasty cough, and that Mr. Vance treats you with proper respect. I think him rather too pushing and familiar, though a pleasant young man on the whole. But, after all, he is only a painter. Bless you, my child, and don't have secrets again from your poor mother.

"JESSICA HAUGHTON."

The enclosed letter was as follows:—

"LIONEL HAUGHTON,—Some men might be displeased at receiving such a letter as you have addressed to me; I am not. At your years and under the same circumstnnces, I might have written a letter much in the same spirit. Relieve your mind—as yet you owe me no obligations; you have only received back a debt due to you. My father was poor; your grandfather, Robert Haughton, assisted him in the cost of my education. I have assisted your father's son; we are quits. Before, however, we decide on having done with each other for the future, I suggest to you to pay me a short visit. Probably I shall not like you, nor you me. But we are both gentlemen, and need not show dislike too coarsely. If you decide on coming, come at once, or possibly you may not find me here. If you refuse, I shall have a poor opinion of your sense and temper, and in a week I shall have forgotten your existence. I ought to add that your father and I were once warm friends, and that by descent I am the head not only of my own race, which ends with me, but of the Haughton family, of which, though your line assumed the name, it was but a younger branch. Nowadays young men are probably not brought up to care for these things.—I was.—Yours,

"GUY HAUGHTON DARRELL."

"Manor House, Fawley."

Sophy picked up the fallen letters, placed them on Lionel's lap, and looked into his face wistfully. He smiled, resumed his mother's epistle, and read the concluding passages, which he had before omitted. Their sudden turn from reproof to tenderness melted him. He began to feel that his mother had a right to blame him for an act of concealment. Still she never would have consented to his writing such a letter; and had that letter been attended with so ill a result? Again he read Mr. Darrell's blunt but not offensive lines. His pride was soothed—why should he not now love his father's friend? He rose briskly, paid for the fruit, and went his way back to the boat with Sophy. As his oars cut the wave he talked gaily, but he ceased to interrogate Sophy on her past. Energetic, sanguine, ambitious, his own future entered now into his thoughts. Still, when the sun sunk as the inn came partially into view from the winding of the banks and the fringe of the willows, his mind again settled on the patient quiet little girl, who had not ventured to ask him one question in return for all he had put so unceremoniously to her. Indeed, she was silently musing over words he had inconsiderately let fall—"What I hate to think you had ever stooped to perform." Little could Lionel guess the unquiet thoughts which those words might hereafter call forth from the brooding deepening meditations of lonely childhood! At length said the boy abruptly, as he had said once before—

"I wish, Sophy, you were my sister." He added in a saddened tone, "I never had a sister—I have so longed for one! However, surely we shall meet again. You go to-morrow—so must I."

Sophy's tears flowed softly, noiselessly.

"Cheer up, ladybird, I wish you liked me half as much as I like you!"

"I do like you—oh, so much!" cried Sophy, passionately.

"Well, then, you can write, you say?"

"A little."

"You shall write to me now and then, and I to you. I'll talk to your grandfather about it. Ah, there he is, surely!"

The boat now ran into the shelving creek, and by the honeysuckle arbor stood Gentleman Waife, leaning on his stick.

"You are late," said the actor, as they landed, and Sophy sprang into his arms. "I began to be uneasy, and came here to inquire after you. You have not caught cold, child?"

SOPHY.—"Oh, no."

"LIONEL.—"She is the best of children.

Pray, come into the inn, Mr. Waife; no toddy, but some refreshment."

WAIFE.—"I thank you—no, sir; I wish to get home at once. I walk slowly; it will be dark soon."

Lionel tried in vain to detain him. There was a certain change in Mr. Waife's manner to him; it was much more distant—it was even pettish, if not surly. Lionel could not account for it—thought it mere whim at first, but as he walked part of the way back with them towards the village, this asperity continued, nay, increased. Lionel was hurt; he arrested his steps.

"I see you wish to have your grandchild to yourself now. May I call early to-morrow? Sophy will tell you that I hope we may not altogether lose sight of each other. I will give you my address when I call."

"What time to-morrow, sir?"

"About nine."

Waife bowed his head and walked on, but Sophy looked back towards her boy friend, sorrowfully, gratefully—twilight in the skies that had been so sunny—twilight in her face that had been so glad! She looked back once, twice, thrice, as Lionel halted on the road and kissed his hand. The third time Waife said, with unwonted crossness—

"Enough of that, Sophy; looking after young men is not proper! What does he mean about 'seeing each other, and giving me his address?'"

"He wished me to write to him sometimes, and he would write to me."

Waife's brow contracted; but if, in the excess of grandfatherly caution he could have supposed that the bright-hearted boy of seventeen meditated ulterior ill to that fairy child in such a scheme for correspondence, he must have been in his dotage, and he had not hitherto evinced any signs of that.

Farewell, pretty Sophy! the evening star shines upon yon elm-tree that hides thee from view. Fading—fading grows the summer landscape; faded already from the landscape thy gentle image! So ends a holiday in life. Hallow it, Sophy; hallow it, Lionel! Life's holidays are not too many!

CHAPTER XVII.

By this chapter it appeareth that he who sets out on a career can scarcely expect to walk in perfect comfort, if he exchange his own thick-soled shoes for dress-boots which were made for another man's measure, and that the said boots may not the less pinch for being brilliantly varnished.—It also showeth, for the instruction of Men and States, the connection between democratic opinion and wounded self-love; so that, if some Liberal statesman desire to rouse against an aristocracy the class just below it, he has only to persuade a fine lady to be exceedingly civil "to that sort of people."

VANCE, returning late at night, found his friend still up in the little parlor, the windows open, pacing the floor with restless strides, stopping now and then to look at the moon upon the river.

"Such a day as I have had! and twelve shillings for the fly, 'pikes not included," said Vance, much out of humor—

> "'I fly from plate, I fly from pomp,
> I fly from falsehood's specious grin;"

I forget the third line; I know the last is—

> 'To find my welcome at an inn.'

You are silent: I annoyed you by going—could not help it—pity me, and lock up your pride."

"No, my dear Vance, I was hurt for a moment—but that's long since over!"

"Still you seem to have something on your mind," said Vance, who had now finished reading his letters, lighted his cigar, and was leaning against the window as the boy continued to walk to and fro.

"That is true—I have. I should like your advice. Read that letter. Ought I to go?—Would it look mercenary—grasping? You know what I mean."

Vance approached the candles and took the letter. He glanced first at the signature. "Darrell," he exclaimed. "Oh, it is so then!" He read with great attention, put down the letter, and shook Lionel by the hand. "I congratulate you; all is settled as it should be. Go? of course—you would be an ill-mannered lout if you did not. Is it far from hence—must you return to town first?"

LIONEL.—"No! I find I can get across the country—two hours by the railway. There is a station at the town which bears the post-

mark of the letter. I shall make for that, if you advise it.

"You knew I should advise it, or you would not have tortured your intellect by those researches into Bradshaw."

"Shrewdly said," answered Lionel, laughing; "but I wished for your sanction of my crude impressions."

"You never told me your cousin's name was Darrell—not that I should have been much wiser if you had, but, thunder and lightning, Lionel, do you know that your cousin Darrell is a famous man?"

LIONEL.—"Famous!—Nonsense. I suppose he was a good lawyer, for I have heard my mother say, with a sort of contempt, that he had made a great fortune at the bar!"

VANCE.—"But he was in Parliament."

LIONEL.—"Was he? I did not know."

VANCE.—"And this is senatorial fame! You never heard your schoolfellows talk of Mr. Darrell?—they would not have known his name if you had boasted of it."

LIONEL.—"Certainly not."

VANCE.—"Would your schoolfellows have known the names of Wilkie, of Landseer, of Turner, Maclise—I speak of Painters!"

LIONEL.—"I should think so, indeed."

VANCE (soliloquizing).—"And yet Her Serene Sublimityship, Lady Selina Vipont, says to me with divine compassion, 'Not in the way of your delightful art to know such men as Mr. Darrell!' Oh, as if I did not see through it too when she said, apropos of my jean cap and velveteen jacket, 'What matters how *you* dress? Every one knows who you are!' Would she have said that to the Earl of Dunder, or even to Sir Gregory Stollhead? No. I am the painter Frank Vance—nothing more nor less; and if I stood on my head in a check shirt and a sky-colored apron, Lady Selina Vipont would kindly murmur, 'Only Frank Vance the painter—what does it signify?' Aha!—and they think to put me to use!—puppets and lay figures!—it is I who put them to use! Harkye, Lionel, you are nearer akin to these fine folks than I knew of. Promise me one thing: you may become of their set, by right of your famous Mr. Darrell; if ever you hear an artist, musician, scribbler, no matter what, ridiculed as a tuft-hunter—seeking the great—and so forth—before you join in the laugh, ask some great man's son, with a pedigree that dates from the Ark, 'Are you not a toad-eater too! Do you want political influence?—do you stand contested elections?—do you curry and fawn upon greasy Sam the butcher and grimy Tom the blacksmith for a vote? Why? useful to your career—necessary to your ambition? Aha! is it meaner to curry and fawn upon white-handed women and elegant coxcombs? Tut, tut! useful to a career—necessary to ambition." Vance paused, out of breath. The spoiled darling of the circles—he—to talk such republican rubbish! Certainly he must have taken his two guineas' worth out of those light wines. Nothing so treacherous! they inflame the brain like fire, while melting on the palate like ice. All inhabitants of light-wine countries are quarrelsome and democratic.

LIONEL (astounded).—"No one, I am sure, could have meant to call you a tuft-hunter—of course, every one knows that a great painter—"

VANCE.—"Dates from Michael Angelo, if not from Zeuxis! Common individuals trace their pedigree from their own fathers!—the children of Art from Art's founders!"

Oh Vance, Vance, you are certainly drunk! If that comes from dining with fine people at the Star and Garter, you would be a happier man and as good a painter if your toddy were never sipped save in honeysuckle arbors.

"But," said Lionel, bewildered, and striving to turn his friend's thoughts, "what has all this to do with Mr. Darrell?"

VANCE.—"Mr. Darrel might have been one of the first men in the kingdom. Lady Selina Vipont says so, and she is related, I believe, to every member in the Cabinet. Mr. Darrell can push you in life, and make your fortune, without any great trouble on your own part. Bless your stars, and rejoice that you are not a painter!"

Lionel flung his arm round the artist's broad breast. "Vance, you are cruel!" It was his turn to console the painter, as the painter had three night's before (apropos of the same Mr. Mr. Darrell) consoled him, Vance gradually sobered down, and the young men walked forth in the moonlight. And the eternal stars had the same kind looks for Vance as they had vouchsafed to Lionel.

"When do you start?" asked the painter, as they mounted the stairs to bed.

"To morrow evening. I miss the early train, for I must call first and take leave of Sophy. I hope I may see her again in after-life."

"And I hope, for your sake, that if so, she may not be in the same colored print, with Lady Selina Vipont's eyeglass upon her!"

"What!" said Lionel, laughing; "is Lady Selina Vipont so formidably rude?"

"Rude! nobody is rude in that delightful set. Lady Selina Vipont is excruciatingly—civil.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Being devoted exclusively to a reflection, not inapposite to the events in this history, nor to those in any other which chronicles the life of man.

THERE is one warning lesson in life which few of us have not received, and no book that I can call to memory has noted down with an adequate emphasis. It is this: "Beware of parting!" The true sadness is not in the pain of the parting, it is in the When and the How you are to meet again with the face about to vanish from your view! From the passionate farewell to the woman who has your heart in her keeping, to the cordial good-by exchanged with pleasant companions at a watering-place, a country-house, or the close of a festive day's blythe and careless excursion—a cord, stronger or weaker, is snapped asunder in every parting, and Time's busy fingers are not practised in re-splicing broken ties. Meet again you may; will it be in the same way?—with the same sympathies?—with the same sentiments? Will the souls, hurrying on in diverse paths, unite once more, as if the inverval had been a dream? Rarely, rarely! Have you not, after even a year, even a month's absence, returned to the same place, found the same groups reassembled, and yet sighed to yourself,—"But where is the charm that once breathed from the spot, and once smiled from the faces?" A poet has said, "Eternity itself cannot restore the loss struck from the minute." Are you happy in the spot on which you tarry with the persons, whose voices are now melodious to your ear?—beware of parting; or, if part you must, say not in insolent defiance to Time and Destiny, "What matters!—we shall soon meet again."

Alas, and alas! when we think of the lips which murmured, "Soon meet again," and remember how, in heart, soul, and thought, we stood for ever divided the one from the other, when, once more face to face, we each inly exclaimed,—"Met again!"

The air that we breathe makes the medium through which sound is conveyed; be the instrument unchanged, be the force which is applied to it the same, still, the air that thou seest not, *the air* to thy ear gives the music.

Ring a bell underneath an exhausted receiver, thou wilt scarce hear the sound; give the bell due vibration by free air in warm daylight, or sink it down to the heart of the ocean, where the air, all compressed, fills the vessel around it,* and the chime, heard afar, starts thy soul, checks my footstep,—unto deep calls the deep—a voice from the ocean is borne to thy soul.

Where, then, the change, when thou sayest, "Lo, the same metal—why so faint heard the ringing?" Ask the air that thou seest not, or above thee in sky, or below thee in ocean. Art thou sure that the bell, so faint-heard, is not struck underneath an exhausted receiver?

CHAPTER XIX.

The wandering inclinations of Nomad Tribes not to be accounted for on the principles of action peculiar to civilized men, who are accustomed to live in good houses and able to pay the income-tax.—When the money that once belonged to a man civilized, vanishes into the pockets of a nomad, neither lawful art nor occult science can, with certainty, discover what he will do with it.—Mr. Vance narrowly escapes well-merited punishment from the nails of the British Fair.—Lionel Houghton, in the temerity of youth, braves the dangers of a British Railway.

THE morning was dull and overcast, rain gathering in the air, when Vance and Lionel walked to Waife's lodging. As Lionel placed his hand on the knocker of the private door, the Cobbler, at his place by the window in the stall beside, glanced towards him, and shook his head.

"No use knocking, gentlemen. Will you kindly step in?—this way."

* The bell in a sunk diving-bell, where the air is compressed, sounds with increased power. Sound travels four times quicker in water than in the upper air.

"Do you mean that your lodgers are out?" asked Vance.

"Gone!" said the Cobbler, thrusting his awl with great vehemence through the leather destined to the repair of a ploughman's boot.

"Gone—for good!" cried Lionel; "you cannot mean it. I call by appointment."

"Sorry, sir, for your trouble. Stop a bit; I have a letter here for you." The Cobbler dived into a drawer, and from a medley of nails and thongs drew forth a letter addressed to L. Haughton, Esq.

"Is this from Waife? How on earth did he know my surname? you never mentioned it, Vance?"

"Not that I remember. But you said you found him at the inn, and they knew it there. It is on the brass-plate of your knapsack. No matter,—what does he say?" and Vance looked over his friend's shoulder and read:—

"SIR,—I most respectfully thank you for your condescending kindness to me and my grandchild; and your friend, for his timely and generous aid. You will pardon me, that the necessity which knows no law obliges me to leave this place some hours before the time of your proposed visit. My grandchild says you intended to ask her sometimes to write to you. Excuse me, sir; on reflection, you will perceive how different your ways of life are from those which she must tread with me. You see before you a man who—but, I forget, you see him no more, and probably never will. —Your most humble and most obliged obedient servant, "W. W."

VANCE.—"Who never more may trouble you—trouble you! Where have they gone?"

COBBLER.—"Don't know; would you like to take a peep in the crystal—perhaps you've the gift, unbeknown?"

"VANCE.—"Not I—Bah! Come away, Lionel."

"Did not Sophy even leave any message for me?" asked the boy, sorrowfully.

"To be sure she did; I forgot—no, not exactly a message, but this—I was to be sure to give it to you." And out of his miscellaneous receptacle the Cobbler extracted a little book. Vance looked and laughed—"*The Butterflies' Ball and the Grasshoppers' Feast.*"

Lionel did not share the laugh. He plucked the book to himself, and read on the fly-leaf, in a child's irregular scrawl, blistered too with the unmistakable trace of fallen tears, these words:—

"Do not Scorn it. I have nothing else I can think of which is All Mine. Miss Jane Burton gave it me for being Goode. Grandfather says you are too high for us, and that I shall not see yon More; but I shall never forget how kind you were,—never—never.—SOPHY."

Said the Cobbler, his awl upright in the hand which rested on his knee,—"What a plague did the 'Stronomers discover Herschell for? You see, sir," addressing Vance, "things odd and strange all come along o' Herschell."

"What!—Sir John?"

"No, the star he poked out. He's a awful star for females! hates 'em like poison! I suspect he's been worriting hisself into her nativity, for I got out from her the year, month, and day she was born, hour unbeknown, but calkelating by noon, Herschell was dead agin her in the Third and Ninth House, —Voyages, Travels Letters, News, Church Matters, and suchlike. But it will all come right after he's transited. Her Jupiter must be good. But I only hope," added the Cobbler, solemnly, "that they won't go a-discovering any more stars. The world did a deal better without the new one, and they do talk of a Neptune—as bad as Saturn!"

"And this is the last of her!" said Lionel, sadly putting the book into his breast-pocket. "Heaven shield her wherever she goes!"

VANCE.—"Don't you think Waife and the poor little girl will come back again?"

COBBLER.—P'raps; I know be was looking hard into the county map at the stationer's over the way; that seems as if he did not mean to go very far. P'raps he may come back."

VANCE.—"Did he take all his goods with him?"

COBBLER.—"Barrin' an old box—nothing in it, I expect, but theatre rubbish—play-books, paints, an old wig, and sichlike. He has good clothes—always had; and so has she, but they don't make more than a bundle."

VANCE.—"But surely you must know what the old fellow's project is. He has got from me a great sum—what will he do with it?"

COBBLER."Just what has been a-bothering me. What will he do with it? I cast a figure to know—could not make it out. Strange signs in Twelfth House. Enemies and Big Animals. Well, well, he's a marbellous man, and if he warn't a misbeliever in the crystal, I

should say he was under Herschell; for you see, sir" (laying hold of Vance's button, as he saw that gentleman turning to escape)—"you see Herschell, though he be a sinister chap eno', specially in affairs connected with t'other sex, disposes the native to dive into the mysteries of natur. I'm a Herschell man, out and outer! Born in March, and—"

"As mad as its hares," muttered Vance, wrenching his button from the Cobbler's grasp, and impatiently striding off. But he did not effect his escape so easily, for, close at hand, just at the corner of the lane, a female group, headed by Merle's gaunt housekeeper, had been silently collecting from the moment the two friends had paused at the Cobbler's door. And this petticoated divan suddenly closing round the painter, one pulled him by the sleeve, another by the jacket, and a third, with a nose upon which somebody had sat in early infancy, whispered, "Please, sir, take my pictur fust."

Vane stared aghast—"Your picture, you drab!" Here another model of rustic charms, who might have furnished an ideal for the fat scullion in *Tristram Shandy*, bobbing a curtsy, put in her rival claim.

"Sir, if you don't objex to coming in to the kitching, after the family has gone to bed, I don't care if I lets you make a minnytur of me for two pounds."

"Miniature of you, porpoise!"

"Polly, sir, not Porpus—ax pardon. I shall clean myself, and I have a butyful new cap—Honeytun, and—"

"Let the gentleman go, will you?" said a third; "I am surprised at ye, Polly. The kitching unbeknown! Sir, I'm in the nussary—yes, sir—and missus says you may take me any time, purvided you'll take the babby, in the back parlor—yes, sir, Number 5 in the High Street. Mrs. Spratt,—yes, sir. Babby has had the smallpox—in case you're a married gentleman with a family—quite safe there—yes, sir."

Vance could endure no more, and, forgetful of that gallantry which should never desert the male sex, burst through the phalanx with an anathema, blackening alike the beauty and the virture of those on whom it fell—that would have justified a cry of shame from every manly bosom, and which at once changed into shrill wrath the supplicatory tones with which he had been hitherto addressed. Down the street he hurried, and down the street followed the insulted fair. "Hiss—hiss—no gentleman, no gentleman! Aha—skulk off—do—low blaggurd!" shrieked Polly. From their counters shop-folks rushed to their doors. Stray dogs, excited by the clamor, ran wildly after the fugitive man, yelping "in madding bray!" Vance, fearing to be clawed by the females if he merely walked, sure to be bitten by the dogs if he ran, ambled on, strove to look composed, and carry his nose high in its native air, till, clearing the street, he saw a hedgerow to the right—leapt it with an agility which no stimulus less preternatural than that of self-preservation could have given to his limbs, and then shot off like an arrow, and did not stop, till, out of breath, he dropt upon the bench in the sheltering honeysuckle arbor. Here he was still fanning himself with his cap, and muttering unmentionable expletives, when he was joined by Lionel, who had tarried behind to talk more about Sophy to the Cobbler, and who, unconscious that the din which smote his ear was caused by his ill-starred friend, had been enticed to go up-stairs and look after Sophy in the crystal—vainly. When Vance had recited his misadventures, and Lionel had sufficiently condoled with him, it became time for the latter to pay his share of the bill, pack up his knapsack, and start for the train. Now, the station could only be reached by penetrating the heart of the village, and Vance swore that he had had enough of that. "*Peste!*" said he; "I should pass right before No. 5 in the High Street, and the nuss and the babby will be there on the threshold, like Virgil's picture of the infernal regions—

'Infantumque animæ flentes in limine primo.'

We will take leave of each other here. I shall go by the boat to Chertsey whenever I shall have sufficiently recovered my shaken nerves. There are one or two picturesque spots to be seen in that neighborhood. In a few days I shall be in town; write to me there, and tell me how you get on. Shake hands, and Heaven speed you. But, ah! now you have paid your moiety of the bill, have you enough left for the train?"

"Oh, yes, the fare is but a few shillings; but, to be sure, a fly to Fawley? I ought not to go on foot" (proudly); "and, too, supposing he affronts me, and I have to leave his

house suddenly? May I borrow a sovereign? my mother will call and repay it."

VANCE (magnificently).—"There it is, and not much more left in my purse—that cursed Star and Garter! and those three pounds!"

LIONEL (sighing).—"Which were so well spent! Before you sell that picture, do let me make a copy."

VANCE.—"Better take a model of your own. Village full of them; you could bargain with a porpoise for half the money which I was duped into squandering away on a chit! But don't look so grave; you may copy me if you can!"

"Time to start, and must walk brisk, sir," said the jolly landlord, looking in.

"Good-by, good-by."

And so departed Lionel Haughton upon an emprise as momentous to that youth-errant as Perilous Bridge or Dragon's Cave could have been to knighterrant of old."

"Before we decide on having done with each other, a short visit"—so ran the challenge from him who had everything to give unto him who had everything to gain. And how did Lionel Haughton, the ambitious and aspiring, contemplate the venture in which success would admit him within the gates of the golden Carduel an equal in the lists with the sons of paladins, or throw him back to the arms of the widow who let a first floor in the back streets of Pimlico? Truth to say, as he strode, musingly towards the station for starting, where the smoke-cloud now curled from the wheel-track of iron,—truth to say, the anxious doubt which disturbed him was not that which his friends might have felt on his behalf.

In words, it would have shaped itself thus—"Where *is* that poor little Sophy! and what will become of her—what?" But when, launched on the journey, hurried on to its goal, the thought of the ordeal before him forced itself on his mind, he muttered inly to himself—"Done with each other; let it be as he pleases, so that I do not fawn on his pleasure. Better a million times enter life as a penniless gentleman, who must work his way up like a man, than as one who creeps on his knees into fortune, shaming birth-right of gentleman, or soiling honor of man." Therefore taking into account the poor cousin's vigilant pride on the *qui vive* for offence, and the rich cousin's temper (as judged by his letters) rude enough to present it, we must own that if Lionel Haughton has at this moment what is commonly called "a chance," the question as yet is not, what is that chance, but *what will he do with it?* And as the reader advances in this history, he will acknowledge that there are few questions in this world so frequently agitated, to which the solution is more important to each puzzled mortal, than that upon which starts every sage's discovery, every novelist's plot—that which applies to MAN'S LIFE, from its first sleep in the cradle, "WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?"

BOOK SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

Primitive character of the country in certain districts of Great Britain.—Connection between the features of surrounding scenery and the mental and moral inclinations of man, after the fashion of all sound Ethnological Historians.—A charioteer, to whom an experience of British Laws suggests an ingenious mode of arresting the progress of Roman Papacy, carries Lionel Haughton and his fortunes to a place which allows of description and invites repose.

In safety, but with naught else rare enough, in a railway train, to deserve commemoration, Lionel reached the station to which he was bound. He there inquired the distance to Fawley Manor House; it was five miles. He ordered a fly, and was soon wheeled briskly along a rough parish-road, through a country strongly contrasting the gay River Scenery he had so lately quitted. Quite as English, but rather the England of a former race than that which spreads round our own generation like one vast suburb of garden-ground and villas —Here, nor village, nor spire, nor porter's lodge came in sight. Rare even were the cornfields—wide spaces of unenclosed common opened, solitary and primitive, on the road, bordered by large woods, chiefly of beech, closing the horizon with ridges of undulating green. In such an England, Knights Templars might have wended their way to scattered monasteries, or fugitive partisans in the bloody Wars of the Roses have found shelter under leafy coverts.

The scene had its romance, its beauty—half savage, half gentle—leading perforce the mind of any cultivated and imaginative gazer far back from the present day—waking up long-forgotten passages from old poets. The stillness of such wastes of sward—such deeps of woodland—induced the nurture of reverie, gravely soft and lulling. There, Ambition might give rest to the wheel of Ixion, Avarice to the sieve of the Danaïds; there, disappointed Love might muse on the brevity of all human passions, and count over the tortured hearts that have found peace in holy meditation, or are now stilled under grassy knolls. See where, at the crossing of three roads upon the waste, the landscape suddenly unfolds—an upland in the distance, and on the upland a building, the first sign of social man. What is the building? only a silenced windmill—the sails dark and sharp against the dull leaden sky.

Lionel touched the driver—"Are we yet on Mr. Darrell's property?" Of the extent of that property he had involuntarily conceived a vast idea.

"Lord, sir, no; we be two miles from Squire Darrell's. He han't much property to speak of hereabouts. But he bought a good bit o' land, too, some years ago, ten or twelve mile 'tother side o' the county. First time you are going to Fawley, sir?"

"Yes."

"Ah! I don't mind seeing you afore—and I should have known you if I had, for it is seldom indeed I have a fare to Fawley old Manor House. It must be, I take it, four or five years ago sin' I wor there with a gent, and he went away while I wor feeding the horse—did me out o' my back fare. What business had he to walk when he came in my fly?—Shabby."

"Mr. Darrell lives very retired, then—sees few persons?"

"'Spose so. I never see'd him as I knows on; see'd two o' his hosses though—rare good uns;" and the driver whipped on his own horse, took to whistling, and Lionel asked no more.

At length the chaise stopped at a carriage gate, receding from the road, and deeply shadowed by venerable trees—no lodge. The driver, dismounting, opened the gate.

"Is this the place?"

The driver nodded assent, remounted, and drove on rapidly through what might, by courtesy, be called a park. The enclosure was indeed little beyond that of a good-sized paddock—its boundaries were visible on every side—but swelling uplands, covered with massy foliage sloped down to its wild, irregular turf soil—soil poor for pasturage, but pleasant to the eye; with dell and dingle, bosks of fantastic pollards—dotted oaks of vast growth—here and there a weird hollow thorn-tree—patches of fern and gorse. Hoarse and loud cawed the rooks—and deep, deep as from the innermost core of the lovely woodlands, came the mellow note of the cuckoo.

A few moments more a wind of the road brought the house in sight. At its rear lay a piece of water, scarcely large enough to be styled a lake—too winding in its shaggy banks—its ends too concealed by trees and islet, to be called by the dull name of pond. Such as it was, it arrested the eye before the gaze turned towards the house—it had an air of tranquility so sequestered, so solemn. A lively man of the world would have been seized with spleen at the first glimpse of it. But he who had known some great grief — some anxious care—would have drunk the calm into his weary soul like an anodyne. The house—small, low, ancient, about the date of Edward VI., before the statelier architecture of Elizabeth. Few houses in England so old, indeed, as Fawley Manor House. A vast weight of roof, with high gables—windows on the upper story projecting far over the lower part—a covered porch with a coat of half-obliterated arms deep panelled over the oak door. Nothing grand, yet all how venerable!

But what is this? Close beside the old, quiet, unassuming Manor House rises the skeleton of a superb and costly pile—a palace uncompleted, and the work evidently suspended—perhaps long since, perhaps now for ever. No busy workmen nor animated scaffolding. The perforated battlements roofed over with visible haste—here with slate, there with tile; the Elizabethan mullion casements unglazed; some roughly boarded across—some with staring forlorn apertures, that showed floorless chambers — for winds to whistle through and rats to tenant. Weeds and long grass were growing over blocks of stone that lay at hand. A wallflower had forced itself into root on the sill of a giant oriel. The effect was startling. A fabric which he who conceived it must have founded for posterity—so solid its masonry, so thick its walls—and thus abruptly left to moulder—a palace constructed for the reception of crowding guests—the pomp of stately revels—abandoned to owl and bat. And the homely old house beside it, which that lordly hall was doubtless designed to replace, looking so safe and tranquil at the baffled presumption of its spectral neighbor.

The driver had rung the bell, and now turning back to the chaise, met Lionel's inquiring eye, and said—"Yes; Squire Darrell began to build that—many years ago—when I was a boy. I heerd say it was to be the show-house of the whole county. Been stopped these ten or a dozen years."

"Why?—do you know?"

"No one knows. Squire was a lawyer, I b'leve—perhaps he put it into Chancery. My wife's grandfather was put into Chancery jist as he was growing up, and never grew afterwards—never got out o' it—nout ever does. There's our churchwarden comes to me with a petition to sign agin the Pope. Says I, 'that old Pope is always in trouble—what's he bin doin now?' Says he, 'Spreading! He's agot into Parlyment, and he's now got a colledge, and we pays for it. I doesn't know how to stop him.' Says I, 'Put the Pope into Chancery, along with wife's grandfather, and he'll never spread agin.'"

The driver had thus just disposed of the Papacy, when an elderly servant, out of livery, opened the door. Lionel sprung from the chaise, and paused in some confusion—for then, for the first time, there darted across him the idea that he had never written to announce his acceptance of Mr. Darrell's invitation—that he ought to have done so—that he might be expected. Meanwhile the servant surveyed him with some surprise. "Mr. Darrell?" hesitated Lionel, inquiringly.

"Not at home, sir," replied the man, as if Lionel's business was over, and he had only to re-enter his chaise. The boy was naturally rather bold than shy, and he said, with a certain assured air, "My name is Haughton. I come here on Mr. Darrell's invitation."

The servant's face changed in a moment—

he bowed respectfully. "I beg pardon, sir. I will look for my master—he is somewhere on the grounds." The servant then approached the fly, took out the knapsack, and observing Lionel had his purse in his hand, said, "Allow me to save you that trouble, sir. Driver, round to the stable-yard." Stepping back into the house, the servant threw open a door to the left, on entrance, and advanced a chair—"If you will wait here a moment, sir, I will see for my master."

CHAPTER II.

Guy Darrell—and Still'd Life.

THE room in which Lionel now found himself was singularly quaint. An antiquarian or architect would have discovered at a glance that, at some period it had formed part of the entrance-hall; and when, in Elizabeth's or James the First's day, the refinement in manners began to penetrate from baronial mansions to the homes of the gentry, and the entrance-hall ceased to be the common refectory of the owner and his dependants, this apartment had been screened off by perforated panels, which, for the sake of warmth and comfort, had been filled up into solid wainscot by a succeeding generation.

Thus one side of the room was richly carved with geometrical designs and arabesque pilasters, while the other three sides were in small simple panels, with a deep fantastic frieze in plaster, depicting a deer-chase in relief, and running between wood-work and ceiling. The ceiling itself was relieved by long pendants, without any apparent meaning, and by the crest of the Darrells, a heron, wreathed round with the family motto, "*Ardua petit Ardea.*" It was a dining-room, as was shown by the character of the furniture. But there was no attempt on the part of the present owner, and there had clearly been none on the part of his predecessor, to suit the furniture to the room. The furniture, indeed, was of the heavy graceless taste of George the First—cumbrous chairs in walnut-tree—with a worm-eaten mosaic of the heron on their homely backs, and a faded blue worsted on their seats—a marvellously ugly sideboard to match, and on it a couple of black shagreen cases, the lids of which were flung open, and discovered the pistol-shaped handles of silver knives. The mantelpiece reached to the ceiling, in panelled compartments, with heraldic shields, and supported by rude stone Caryatides. On the walls were several pictures—family portraits, for the names were inscribed on the frames. They varied in date from the reign of Elizabeth to that of George I.

A strong family likeness pervaded them all—high features, dark hair, grave aspects—save indeed one, a Sir Ralph Haughton Darrell, in a dress that spoke of the holiday date of Charles II.—all knots, lace, and ribbons; evidently the beau of the race; and he had blue eyes, a blonde peruke, a careless profligate smile, and looked altogether as devil-me-care, rakehelly, handsome, good-for-naught, as ever swore at a drawer, beat a watchman, charmed a lady, terrified a husband, and hummed a song as he pinked his man.

Lionel was still gazing upon the effigies of this airy cavalier, when the door behind him opened very noiselessly, and a man of imposing presence stood on the threshold—stood so still, and the carved mouldings of the doorway so shadowed, and, as it were, cased round his figure, that Lionel, on turning quickly, might have mistaken him for a portrait brought into bold relief, from its frame, by a sudden fall of light. We hear it, indeed, familiarly said that such an one is like an old picture. Never could it be more appositely said than of the face on which the young visitor gazed, much startled and somewhat awed. Not such an inferior limners had painted in the portraits there, though it had sometimes in common with those family lineaments, but such as might have looked tranquil power out of the canvass of Titian.

The man stepped forward, and the illusion passed. "I thank you," he said, holding out his hand, "for taking me at my word, and answering me thus in person." He paused a moment, surveying Lionel's countenance with a keen but not unkindly eye, and added softly, "Very like your father."

At these words Lionel involuntarily pressed the hand which he had taken. That hand did not return the pressure. It lay an instant in Lionel's warm clasp—not repelling, not responding—and was then very gently withdrawn.

"Did you come from London?"

"No, sir; I found your letter yesterday at Hampton Court. I had been staying some days in that neighborhood. I came on, this morning,—I was afraid too unceremoniously; your kind welcome reassures me there."

The words were well chosen and frankly said. Probably they pleased the host, for the expression of his countenance was, on the whole, propitious; but he merely inclined his head with a kind of lofty indifference, then, glancing at his watch, he rang the bell. The servant entered promptly. "Let dinner be served within an hour."

"Pray sir," said Lionel, "do not change your hours on my account."

Mr. Darrell's brow slightly contracted. Lionel's tact was in fault there; but the great man answered quietly, "All hours are the same to me; and it were strange if a host could be deranged by consideration to his guest—on the first day too. Are you tired? Would you like to go to your room, or look out for half an hour? The sky is clearing."

"I should so like to look out, sir."

"This way then."

Mr. Darrell, crossing the hall, threw open a door opposite to that by which Lionel entered, and the lake (we will so call it) lay before them,—separated from the house only by a shelving gradual declivity, on which were a few beds of flowers—not the most in vogue nowadays—and disposed in rambling old-fashioned parterres. At one angle, a quaint and dilapidated sun-dial; at the other, a long bowling-alley, terminated by one of those summer-houses which the Dutch taste, following the Revolution of 1688, brought into fashion. Mr. Darrell passed down this alley (no bowls there now), and observing that Lionel looked curiously towards the summer-house, of which the doors stood open, entered it. A lofty room with coved ceiling, painted with Roman trophies of helms and fasces, alternated with crossed fifes and fiddles, painted also.

"Amsterdam manners," said Mr. Darrell, slightly shrugging his shoulders. "Here a former race heard music, sung glees, and smoked from clay pipes. That age soon passed, unsuited to English energies, which are not to be united with Holland phlegm! But the view from the window—look out there. I wonder whether men in whigs and women in hoops enjoyed *that*. It is a mercy they did not clip those banks into a straight canal!"

The view was indeed lovely—the water looked so blue and so large and so limpid, woods and curving banks reflected deep on its peaceful bosom.

"How Vance would enjoy this!" cried Lionel. "It would come into a picture even better than the Thames."

"Vance—who is Vance?"

"The artist—a great friend of mine. Surely, sir, you have heard of him, or seen his pictures!"

"Himself and his pictures are since my time. Days tread down days for the Recluse, and he forgets that celebrities rise with their suns, to wane with their moons,—

'Traditur dies die,
Novæque pergunt interire lunæ.'"

"All suns do not set—all moons do not wane!" cried Lionel, with blunt enthusiasm. "When Horace speaks elsewhere of the Julian star, he compares it to a moon—'*inter ignes minores*'—and surely Fame is not among the orbs which '*pergunt interire*'—hasten on to perish!"

"I am glad to see that you retain your recollection of Horace," said Mr. Darrell frigidly, and without continuing the allusion to celebrities, "the most charming of all poets to a man of my years, and" (he very drily added) "the most useful for popular quotation to men at any age."

Then sauntering forth carelessly, he descended the sloping turf, came to the water-side, and threw himself at length on the grass—the wild thyme which he crushed sent up its bruised fragrance. There, resting his face on his hand, Darrell gazed along the water in abstracted silence. Lionel felt that he was forgotten; but he was not hurt. By this time a strong and admiring interest for his cousin had sprung up within his breast—he would have found it difficult to explain why. But whosoever at that moment could have seen Guy Darrell's musing countenance, or whosoever, a few minutes before could have heard the very sound of his voice—sweetly, clearly full—each slow enunciation unaffectedly, mellowly distinct—making musical the homeliest roughest word, would have understood and shared the interest which

Lionel could not explain. There are living human faces, which, independently of mere physical beauty, charm and enthral us more than the most perfect lineaments which Greek sculptor ever lent to a marble face: there are key-notes in the thrilling human voice, simply uttered, which can haunt the heart, rouse the passions, lull rampant multitudes, shake into dust the thrones of guarded kings, and effect more wonders than ever yet have been wrought by the most artful chorus or the deftest quill.

In a few minutes the swans from the further end of the water came sailing swiftly towards the bank on which Darrell reclined. He had evidently made friends with them, and they rested their white breasts close on the margin, seeking to claim his notice with a low hissing salutation, which, it is to be hoped, they changed for something less sibilant in that famous song with which they depart this life.

Darrell looked up. "They come to be fed," said he, "smooth emblems of the great social union. Affection is the offspring of utility. I am useful to them—they love me." He rose, uncovered, and bowed to the birds in mock courtesy: "Friends, I have no bread to give you."

LIONEL.—"Let me run in for some: I would be useful too."

MR. DARRELL.—"Rival!—useful to my swans?"

LIONEL (tenderly).—"Or to you, sir."

He felt as if he had said too much, and without waiting for permission ran indoors to find some one whom he could ask for the bread.

"Sonless, childless, hopeless, objectless!" said Darrell, murmuring to himself, and sunk again into reverie.

By the time Lionel returned with the bread, another petted friend had joined the master. A tame doe had caught sight of him from her covert far away, came in light bounds to his side, and was pushing her delicate nostril into his drooping hand. At the sound of Lionel's hurried step, she took flight, trotted off a few paces, then turned, looking wistfully.

"I did not know you had deer here."

"Deer!—in this little poddock!—of course not; only that doe. Fairthorn introduced her here. By the by," continued Darrell, who was now throwing the bread to the swans, and had resumed his careless unmeditative manner, "you were not aware that I have a brother hermit—a companion besides the swans and the doe. Dick Fairthorn is a year or two younger than myself, the son of my father's bailiff. He was the cleverest boy at his grammar-school. Unluckily he took to the flute, and unfitted himself for the present century. He condescends, however, to act as my secretary—a fair classical scholar—plays chess—is useful to me—I am useful to him. We have an affection for each other. I never forgive any one who laughs at him. The half-hour bell, and you will meet him at dinner. Shall we come in and dress?"

They entered the house—the same manservant was in attendance in the hall. "Show Mr. Haughton to his room." Darrell inclined his head—I use that phrase, for the gesture was neither bow nor nod—turned down a narrow passage and disappeared.

Led up an uneven staircase of oak, black as ebony, with huge balustrades, and newel-posts supporting clumsy balls, Lionel was conducted to a small chamber, modernized a century ago by a faded Chinese paper, and a mahogany bedstead, which took up three-fourths of the space, and was crested with dingy plumes, that gave it the cheerful look of a hearse; and there the attendant said, "Have you the key of your knapsack, sir? shall I put out your things to dress?" Dress! Then for the first time the boy remembered that he had brought with him no evening dress—nay, evening dress, properly so called, he possessed not at all in any corner of the world. It had never yet entered into his modes of existence. Call to mind when you were a boy of seventeen, "betwixt two ages hovering like a star," and imagine Lionel's sensations. He felt his cheek burn as if he had been detected in a crime. "I have no dress things," he said, piteously; "only a change of linen, and this," glancing at the summer jacket. The servant was evidently a most gentlemanlike man—his native sphere that of groom of the chambers. "I will mention it to Mr. Darrell; and if you will favor me with your address in London, I will send to telegraph for what you want against to-morrow."

"Many thanks," answered Lionel, recovering his presence of mind; "I will speak to Mr. Darrell myself."

"There is the hot water, sir; that is the bell. I have the honor to be placed at your commands." The door closed, and Lionel unlocked his knapsack—other trousers, other waistcoat had he—those worn at the fair, and once white. Alas! they had not since then passed to the care of the laundress. Other shoes—doubled-soled for walking. There was no help for it but to appear at dinner, attired as he had been before, in his light pedestrian jacket, morning waistcoat flowered with sprigs, and a fawn-colored nether man. Could it signify much—only two men? Could the grave Mr. Darrell regard such trifles?—Yes, if they intimated want of due respect.

"Durum! sed fit levius Patientiâ
Quicquid corrigere est nefas."

On descending the stairs, the same high-bred domestic was in waiting to show him into the library. Mr. Darrell was there already, in the simple but punctilious costume of a gentleman who retains in seclusion the habits customary in the world. At the first glance Lionel thought he saw a slight cloud of displeasure on his host's brow. He went up to Mr. Darrell ingenuously, and apologized for the deficiencies of his itinerant wardrobe. "Say the truth," said his host; "you thought you were coming to an old churl, with whom ceremony was misplaced."

"Indeed no!" exclaimed Lionel. "But—but I have so lately left school."

"Your mother might have thought for you."

"I did not stay to consult her, indeed, sir; I hope you are not offended."

"No, but let me not offend you if I take advantage of my years and our relationship to remark that a young man should be careful not to let himself down below the standard of his own rank. If a king could bear to hear that he was only a ceremonial, a private gentleman may remember that there is but a ceremonial between himself and—his hatter!"

Lionel felt the color mount his brow; but Darrell pressing the distasteful theme no farther, and seemingly forgetting its purport, turned his remarks carelessly towards the weather. "It will be fair to-morrow; there is no mist on the hill yonder. Since you have a painter for a friend, perhaps you yourself are a draughtsman. There are some landscape-effects here which Fairthorn shall point out to you."

"I fear, Mr. Darrell," said Lionel, looking down, "that to-morrow I must leave you."

"So soon? Well, I suppose the place must be very dull."

"Not that—not that; but I have offended you, and I would not repeat the offence. I have not the 'ceremonial' necessary to mark me as a gentleman—either here or at home."

"So! Bold frankness and ready wit command ceremonials," returned Darrell, and for the first time his lip wore a smile. "Let me present to you Mr. Fairthorn," as the door, opening, showed a shambling awkward figure with loose black knee-breeches and buckled shoes. The figure made a strange sidelong bow; and hurrying in a lateral course, like a crab suddenly alarmed, towards a dim recess protected by a long table, sunk behind a curtain-fold, and seemed to vanish as a crab does amidst the shingles.

"Three minutes yet to dinner, and two before the letter-carrier goes," said the host, glancing at his watch. "Mr. Fairthorn, will you write a note for me?" There was a mutter from behind the curtain. Darrell walked to the place, and whispered a few words, returned to the hearth rang the bell. "Another letter for the post, Mills: Mr. Fairthorn is sealing it. You are looking at my book-shelves, Lionel. As I understand that your master spoke highly of you, I presume that you are fond of reading."

"I think so, but I am not sure," answered Lionel, whom his cousin's conciliatory words had restored to ease and good-humor.

"You mean, perhaps, that you like reading, if you may choose your own books."

"Or rather, If I may choose my own time to read them, and that would not be on bright summer days."

"Without sacrificing bright summer days, one finds one has made little progress when the long winter nights come."

"Yes, sir. But must the sacrifice be paid in books? I fancy I learned as much in the playground as I did in the schoolroom, and for the last few months, in much my own master, reading hard, in the forenoon, it is true, for many hours at a stretch, and yet again for a few hours at evening, but rambling also through the streets, or listening to a few friends

whom I have contrived to make—I think, if I can boast of any progress at all, the books have the smaller share in it."

"You would, then, prefer an active life to a studious one."

"Oh, yes—yes."

"Dinner is served," said the decorous Mr. Mills, throwing open the door.

CHAPTER III.

In our happy country every man's house is his castle. But however stoutly he fortify it, Care enters, as surely as she did in Horace's time, through the porticoes of a Roman's villa. Nor, whether ceilings be fretted with gold and ivory, or whether only colored with whitewash, does it matter to Care any more than it does to a house-fly. But every tree, be it cedar or blackthorn, can harbor its singing-bird; and few are the homes in which, from nooks least suspected, there starts not a music. It is quite true that, "*non* avium citharæque cantus somnum reducent?" Would not even Damocles himself have forgotten the sword, if the lute-player had chanced on the notes that lull?

THE dinner was simple enough, but well dressed and well served. One footman, in plain livery, assisted Mr. Mills. Darrell ate sparingly, and drank only water, which was placed by his side iced, with a single glass of wine at the close of the repast, which he drank on bending his head to Lionel, with a certain knightly grace, and the prefatory words of "Welcome here to a Haughton." Mr. Fairthorn was less abstemious—tasted of every dish, after examining it long through a pair of tortoise-shell spectacles, and drank leisurely through a bottle of port, holding up every glass to the light. Darrell talked with his usual cold but not uncourteous indifference. A remark of Lionel's on the portraits in the room turned the conversation chiefly upon pictures, and the host showed himself thoroughly accomplished in the attributes of the various schools and masters. Lionel, who was very fond of the art, and indeed painted well for a youthful amateur, listened with great delight.

"Surely, sir," said he, struck much with a very subtle observation upon the causes why the Italian masters admit of copyists with greater facility than the Flemish—"surely, sir, you yourself must have practised the art of painting?"

"Not I; but I instructed myself as a judge of pictures, because at one time I was a collector."

Fairthorn, speaking for the first time: "The rarest collection—such Albert Durers! such Holbeins! and that head by Leonardo da Vinci!" He stopped—looked extremely frightened—helped himself to the port—turning his back upon his host, to hold, as usual, the glass to the light.

"Are they here, sir!" asked Lionel.

Darrell's face darkened, and he made no answer; but his head sank on his breast, and he seemed suddenly absorbed in gloomy thought. Lionel felt that he had touched a wrong chord, and glanced timidly towards Fairthorn; but that gentleman cautiously held up his finger, and then rapidly put it to his lip, and as rapidly drew it away. After that signal, the boy did not dare to break the silence, which now lasted uninterruptedly till Darrell rose, and with the formal and superfluous question, "Any more wine?" led the way back to the library. There he ensconced himself in an easy-chair, and saying, "Will you find a book for yourself, Lionel?" took a volume at random from the nearest shelf, and soon seem absorbed in its contents. The room, made irregular by bay-windows, and shelves that projected as in public libraries, abounded with nook and recess. To one of these Fairthorn sidled himself, and became invisible. Lionel looked round the shelves. No *belles lettres* of our immediate generation were found there—none of those authors most in request in circulating libraries and literary institutes. The shelves disclosed no poets, no essayists, no novelists, more recent than the Johnsonian age. Neither in the lawyer's library were to be found any law books—no, nor the pamphlets and parliamentary volumes that should have spoken of the once eager politician. But there were superb copies of the ancient classics. French and Italian authors were not wanting, nor such of the English as have withstood the test of time. The larger portion of the shelves seemed, however, devoted to philosophical works. Here alone was novelty admitted—the newest essays on science, or the best editions of old works thereon. Lionel at length made his choice—

a volume of the *Faerie Queen.* Coffee was served; at a later hour tea. The clock struck ten. Darrell laid down his book.

"Mr. Fairthorn—the flute!"

From the recess a mutter; and presently—the musician remaining still hidden—there came forth the sweetest note—so dulcet, so plaintive! Lionel's ear was ravished. The music suited well with the enchanted page, through which his fancy had been wandering dream-like—the flute with the *Faerie Queen.* As the air flowed liquid on, Lionel's eyes filled with tears. He did not observe that Darrell was intently watching him. When the music stopped, he turned aside to wipe the tears from his eyes. Somehow or other, what with the poem, what with the flute, his thoughts had wandered far far hence to the green banks and blue waves of the Thames—to Sophy's charming face, to her parting childish gift! And where was she now? Whither passing away, after so brief a holiday, into the shadows of forlorn life?

Darrell's bell-like voice smote his ear.

"Spenser; You love him! Do you write poetry?"

"No, sir; I only feel it!"

"Do neither!" said the host, abruptly. Then, turning away, he lighted his candle, murmured a quick good night, and disappeared through a side-door which led to his own rooms.

Lionel looked round for Fairthorn, who now emerged *ab angulo*—from his nook.

"Oh, Mr. Fairthorn, how you have enchanted me! I never believed the flute could have been capable of such effects!"

Mr. Fairthorn's grotesque face lighted up. He took off his spectacles, as if the better to contemplate the face of his eulogist. "So you were pleased! really?" he said chuckling a strange grim chuckle, deep in his inmost self.

"Pleased! it is a cold word! Who would not be more than pleased?"

"You should hear me in the open air."

"Let me do so—to-morrow."

"My dear young sir, with all my heart. Hist!"—gazing round as if haunted—"I like you. I wish *him* to like you. Answer all his questions as if you did not care how he turned you inside out. Never ask him a question, as if you sought to know what he did not himself confide. So there is something, you think, in a flute, after all? There are people who prefer the fiddle."

"Then they never heard your flute, Mr. Fairthorn." The musician again emitted his discordant chuckle, and, nodding his head nervously and cordially, shambled away without lighting a candle, and was engulfed in the shadows of some mysterious corner.

CHAPTER IV.

The Old World and the New.

It was long before Lionel could sleep. What with the strange house and the strange master—what with the magic flute and the musician's admonitory caution—what with tender and regretful reminiscences of Sophy, his brain had enough to work on. When he slept at last, his slumber was deep and heavy, and he did not wake till gently shaken by the well-bred arm of Mr. Mills. "I humbly beg pardon—nine o'clock, sir, and the breakfast-bell going to ring." Lionel's toilet was soon hurried over; Mr. Darrell and Fairthorn were talking together as he entered the breakfast-room—the same room as that in which they had dined.

"Good morning Lionel," said the host. "No leave-taking to-day as you threatened. I find you have made an appointment with Mr. Fairthorn, and I shall place you under his care. You make like to look over the old house, and make yourself"—Darrell paused—"At home," jerked out Mr. Fairthorn, filling up the *hiatus.* Darrell turned his eye towards the speaker, who evidently became much frightened, and, after looking in vain for a corner, sidled away to the window, and poked himself behind the curtain. "Mr. Fairthorn, in the capacity of my secretary, has learned to find me thoughts, and put them in his own words," said Darrell, with a coldness almost icy. He then seated himself at the breakfast-table; Lionel followed his example, and Mr. Fairthorn, courageously emerging, also took a chair and a roll. "You are a true diviner, Mr. Darrell," said Lionel; "it is a glorious day."

"But there will be showers later. The fish are at play on the surface of the lake," Darrell

added, with a softened glance towards Fairthorn, who was looking the picture of misery. "After twelve, it will be just the weather for trout to rise; and if you fish, Mr. Fairthorn will lend you a rod. He is a worthy successor of Izaak Walton, and loves a companion as Izaak did, but more rarely gets one."

"Are there trout in your lake, sir?"

"The lake! You must not dream of invading that sacred water. The inhabitants of rivulets and brooks not within my boundary are beyond the pale of Fawley civilization, to be snared and slaughtered like Caffres, red men, or any other savages, for whom we bait with a missionary, and whom we impale on a bayonet. But I regard my lake as a politic community, under the protection of the law, and leave its denizens to devour each other, as Europeans, fishes, and other cold-blooded creatures, wisely do, in order to check the overgrowth of population. To fatten one pike it takes a great many minnows. Naturally I support the vested rights of pike. I have been a lawyer."

It would be in vain to describe the manner in which Mr. Darrell vented this or similar remarks of mocking irony, or sarcastic spleen. It was not bitter nor sneering, but in his usual mellifluous level tone and passionless tranquillity.

The breakfast was just over as a groom passed in front of the windows with a led horse. "I am going to leave you, Lionel," said the host, "to make—friends with Mr. Fairthorn, and I thus complete, according to my own original intention, the sentence which he diverted astray." He passed across the hall to the open house-door, and stood by the horse stroking its neck, and giving some directions to the groom. Lionel and Fairthorn followed to the threshold, and the beauty of the horse provoked the boy's admiration; it was a dark muzzled brown, of that fine old-fashioned breed of English roadster, which is now so seldom seen; showy, bow-necked, long-tailed, stumbling, reedy hybrids, born of bad barbs, ill-mated, having mainly supplied their place. This was, indeed, a horse of great power, immense girth of loin, high shoulder, broad hoof; and such a head! the ear, the frontal, the nostril! you seldom see a human physiognomy half so intelligent, half so expressive of that high spirit and sweet generous temper, which, when united, constitute the ideal of thorough-breeding, whether in horse or man. The English rider was in harmony with the English steed. Darrell at this moment was resting his arm lightly on the animal's shoulder, and his head still uncovered. It has been said before that he was of imposing presence; the striking attribute of his person, indeed, was that of unconscious grandeur; yet, though above the ordinary height, he was not very tall—five feet eleven at the utmost—and far from being very erect. On the contrary, there was that habitual bend in his proud neck which men who meditate much and live alone almost invariably contract.

But there was, to use an expression common with our older writers, that "great air" about him which filled the eye, and gave him the dignity of elevated stature, the commanding aspect that accompanies the upright carriage. His figure was inclined to be slender, though broad of shoulder and deep of chest; it was the figure of a young man, and probably little changed from what it might have been at five-and-twenty. A certain youthfulness still lingered even on the countenance—strange, for sorrow is supposed to expedite the work of age; and Darrell had known sorrow of a kind most adapted to harrow his peculiar nature, as great in its degree as ever left man's heart in ruins. No gray was visible in the dark brown hair, that, worn short behind, still retained in front the large Jove-like curl. No wrinkle, save at the corner of the eyes, marred the pale bronze of the firm cheek; the forehead was smooth as marble, and as massive. It was that forehead which chiefly contributed to the superb expression of his whole aspect. It was high to a fault; the perceptive organs, over a dark, strongly-marked, arched eyebrow, powerfully developed, as they are with most eminent lawyers; it did not want for breadth at the temples; yet, on the whole, it bespoke more of intellectual vigor and dauntless will than of serene philosophy or all-embracing benevolence.

It was the forehead of a man formed to command and awe the passions and intellect of others by the strength of passions in himself, rather concentred than chastised, and by an intellect forceful from the weight of its mass rather than the niceness of its balance. The other features harmonized with that brow;

they were of the noblest order of acquiline, at once high and delicate. The lip had a rare combination of exquisite refinement and inflexible resolve. The eye, in repose, was cold, bright, unrevealing, with a certain absent, musing, self-absorbed expression, that often made the man's words appear as if spoken mechanically, and assisted towards that seeming of listless indifference to those whom he addressed, by which he wounded vanity, without, perhaps, any malice prepense. But it was an eye in which the pupil could suddenly expand, the hue change from gray to dark, and the cold still brightness flash into vivid fire. It could not have occurred to any one, even to the most commonplace woman, to have described Darrell's as a handsome face; the expression would have seemed trivial and derogatory: the words that would have occurred to all, would have been somewhat to this effect:—"What a magnificent countenance! What a noble head!"

Yet an experienced physiognomist might have noted that the same lineaments which bespoke a virtue bespoke also its neighboring vice; that with so much will there went stubborn obstinacy; that with that power of grasp there would be the tenacity in adherence which narrows, in astringing, the intellect; that a prejudice once conceived, a passion once cherished, would resist all rational argument for relinquishment. When men of this mould do relinquish prejudice or passion, it is by their own impulse, their own sure conviction that what they hold is worthless: then they do not yield it graciously; they fling it from them in scorn, but not a scorn that consoles. That which they thus wrench away had grown a living part of themselves; their own flesh bleeds—the wound seldom or never heals. Such men rarely fail in the achievement of what they covet, if the gods are neutral; but, adamant against the world, they are vulnerable through their affections. Their love is intense, but undemonstrative; their hatred implacable, but unrevengeful. Too proud to revenge, too galled to pardon.

There stood Guy Darrell, to whom the bar had destined its highest honors, to whom the senate had accorded its most rapturous cheers; and the more you gazed on him as he there stood, the more perplexed became the enigma, how with a career sought with such energy, advanced with such success, the man had abruptly subsided into a listless recluse, and the career had been voluntarily resigned for a home without neighbors, a hearth without children.

"I had no idea," said Lionel, as Darrell rode slowly away, soon lost from sight amidst the thick foliage of summer trees—"I had no idea that my cousin was so young!"

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Fairthorn; "he is only a year older than I am!"

"Older than you!" excaimed Lionel, staring in blunt amaze at the elderly-looking personage beside him; "yet true, he told me so himself."

"And I am fifty-one last birth-day."

"Mr. Darrell fifty-two! Incredible!"

"I don't know why we should ever grow old, the life we lead," observed Mr. Fairthorn, readjusting his spectacles. "Time stands so still! Fishing, too, is very conducive to longevity. If you will follow me, we will get the rods; and the flute—you are quite sure you would like the flute? Yes! thank you, my dear young sir. And yet there are folks who prefer the fiddle!"

"Is not the sun a little too bright for the fly at present; and will you not, in the meanwhile, show me over the house?"

"Very well; not that this house has much worth seeing. The other indeed would have had a music-room! But, after all, nothing like the open air for the flute. This way."

I spare thee, gentle reader, the minute inventory of Fawley Manor House. It had nothing but its antiquity to recommend it. It had a great many rooms, all, except those used as the dining-room and library, very small, and very low—innumerable closets, nooks—unexpected cavities, as if made on purpose for the venerable game of hide-and-seek. Save a stately old kitchen, the offices were sadly defective even for Mr. Darrell's domestic establishment, which consisted but of two men and four maids (the stablemen not lodging in the house). Drawing-room, properly speaking, that primitive mansion had none. At some remote period a sort of gallery under the gable roofs (above the first floor), stretching from end to end of the house, might have served for the reception of guests on grand occasions. For fragments of mouldering tapestry still, here and there clung to the walls; and a high

chimney-piece, whereon, in plaster relief, was commemorated the memorable fishing party of Anthony and Cleopatra, retained patches of color and gilding, which must, when fresh, have made the Egyptian queen still more appallingly hideous, and the fish at the end of Anthony's hook still less resembling any creature known to ichthyologists.

The library had been arranged into shelves from floor to roof by Mr. Darrell's father, and subsequently for the mere purpose of holding as many volumes as possible, brought out into projecting wings (college-like) by Darrell himself, without any pretension to mediæval character. With this room communicated a small reading-closet, which the host reserved to himself; and this, by a circular stair cut into the massive wall, ascended first into Mr. Darrell's sleeping-chamber, and thence into a gable recess that adjoined the gallery, and which the host had fitted up for the purpose of scientific experiments in chemistry, or other branches of practical philosophy. These more private rooms Lionel was not permitted to enter.

Altogether the house was one of those cruel tenements which it would be a sin to pull down, or even materially to alter, but which it would be an hourly inconvenience for a modern family to inhabit. It was out of all character with Mr. Darrell's former position in life, or with the fortune which Lionel vaguely supposed him to possess, and considerably underrated. Like Sir Nicholas Bacon, the man had grown too large for his habitation.

"I don't wonder," said Lionel, as their wanderings over, he and Fairthorn found themselves in the library, "that Mr. Darrell began to build a new house. But it would have been a great pity to pull down this for it."

"Pull down this! Don't hint at such an idea to Mr. Darrell. He would as soon have pulled down the British Monarchy! Nay, I suspect, sooner."

"But the new building must surely have swallowed up the old one?"

"Oh, no; Mr. Darrell had a plan by which he would have enclosed this separately in a kind of court, with an open screen-work or cloister; and it was his intention to appropriate it entirely to mediæval antiquities, of which he has a wonderful collection. He had a notion of illustrating every earlier reign in which his ancestors flourished—different apartments in correspondence with different dates. It would have been a chronicle of national manners."

"But, if it be not an impertinent question, where is this collection! In London?"

"Hush! hush! I will give you a peep of some of the treasures, only don't betray me."

Fairthorn here, with singular rapidity, considering that he never moved in a straightforward direction, undulated into the open air in front of the house, described a rhomboid towards a side-buttress in the new building, near to which was a postern-door; unlocked that door from a key in his pocket, and motioning Lionel to follow him, entered within the ribs of the stony skeleton. Lionel followed in a sort of supernatural awe, and beheld, with more substantial alarm, Mr. Fairthorn winding up an inclined plank which he embraced with both arms, and by which he ultimately ascended to a timber joist in what should have been an upper floor, only flooring there was none. Perched there, Fairthorn glared down on Lionel through his spectacles. "Dangerous," he said, whisperingly; "but one gets used to everything! If *you* feel afraid, don't venture!"

Lionel, animated by that doubt of his courage, sprang up the plank, balancing himself, schoolboy fashion, with outstretched arms, and gained the side of his guide.

"Don't touch me!" exclaimed Mr. Fairthorn, shrinking, "or we shall both be over. Now observe and imitate." Dropping himself then carefully and gradually, till he dropped on the timber joist as if it were a velocipede, his long legs dangling down, he, with thigh and hand, impelled himself onward till he gained the ridge of a wall, on which he delivered his person, and wiped his spectacles.

Lionel was not long before he stood in the same place. "Here we are," said Fairthorn.

"I don't see the collection," answered Lionel, first peering down athwart the joists upon the rugged ground overspread with stones and rubbish, then glancing up through similar interstices above to the gaunt rafters.

"Here are some—most precious," answered Fairthorn, tapping behind him.—"Walled up, except where these boards, cased in iron, are nailed across, with a little door just big enough to creep through; but that is locked—Chubb's

lock, and Mr. Darrell keeps the key!—treasures for a palace! No, you can't peep through here—not a chink; but come on a little further,—mind your footing."

Skirting the wall, and still on the perilous ridge, Fairthorn crept on, formed an angle, and, stopping short, clapped his eye to the crevice of some planks nailed rudely across a yawning aperture. Lionel found another crevice for himself, and saw, piled up in admired disorder, pictures, with their backs turned to a desolate wall, rare cabinets, and articles of curious furniture, chests, boxes, crates—heaped pellmell. This receptacle had been roughly floored in deal, in order to support its miscellaneous contents, and was lighted from a large window (not visible in front of the house), glazed in dull rough glass, with ventilators.

"These are the heavy things, and least costly things, that no one could well rob. The pictures here are merely curious as early specimens, intended for the old house, all spoiling and rotting; Mr. Darrell wishes them to do so, I believe! What he wishes must be done! my dear young sir—a prodigious mind—it is of granite!"

"I cannot understand it," said Lionel, aghast. "The last man I should have thought capriciously whimsical."

"Whimsical! Bless my soul! don't say such a word—don't, pray! or the roof will fall down upon us! Come away. You have seen all you can see. You must go first now—mind that loose stone there!"

Nothing further was said till they were out of the building; and Lionel felt like a knight of old who had been led into sepulchral halls by a wizard.

CHAPTER V.

The annals of empire are briefly chronicled in family records brought down to the present day, showing that the race of men is indeed "like leaves on trees, now green in youth, now withering on the ground." Yet to the branch the most bare will green leaves return, so long as the sap can remount to the branch from the root; but the branch which has ceased to take life from the root—hang it high, hang it low—is a prey to the wind and the woodman.

It was mid-day. The boy and his new friend were standing apart, as becomes silent anglers, on the banks of a narrow brawling rivulet, running through green pastures, half a mile from the house. The sky was overcast, as Darrel had predicted, but the rain did not yet fall. The two anglers were not long before they had filled a basket with small trout.

Then Lionel, who was by no means fond of fishing, laid his rod on the bank, and strolled across the long grass to his companion.

"It will rain soon," said he. "Let me take advantage of the present time, and hear the flute, while we can yet enjoy the open air. No, not by the margin, or you will be always looking after the trout. On the rising ground, see that old thorn-tree—let us go and sit under it. The new building looks well from it. What a pile it would have been! I may not ask you, I suppose, why it is left uncompleted. Perhaps it would have cost too much, or would have been disproportionate to the estate."

"To the present estate it would have been disproportioned, but not to the estate Mr. Darrell intended to add to it. As to cost, you don't know him. He would never have undertaken what he could not afford to complete; and what he once undertook, no thoughts of the cost would have scared him from finishing. Prodigious mind—granite! And so rich!" added Fairthorn, with an air of great pride. "I ought to know; I write all his letters on money matters. How much do you think he has, without counting land?"

"I cannot guess."

"Nearly half a million; in two years it will be more than half a million. And he had not three hundred a-year when he began life; for Fawley was sadly mortgaged."

"Is it possible! Could any lawyer make half a million at the bar?"

"If any man could, Mr. Darrell would. When he sets his mind on a thing—the thing is done; no help for it. But his fortune was not all made at the bar, though a great part of it was. An old East Indian bachelor of the same name, but who had never been heard of hereabouts till he wrote from Calcutta to Mr. Darrell (inquiring if they were any relations—and Mr. Darrell referred him to the College-at-Arms, which proved that they came from the same stock ages ago)—left him all his money. Mr. Darrell was not dependent on his profession when he stood up in Parliament. And since we have been here, such savings!

Not that Mr. Darrell is avaricious, but how can he spend money in this place? You should have seen the establishment we kept in Carlton Gardens. Such a cook too—a French gentleman—looked like a marquess. Those were happy days, and proud ones! It is true that I order the dinner here, but it can't be the same thing. Do you like fillet of veal?—we have one to-day."

"We used to have fillet of veal at school on Sundays. I thought it good then."

"It makes a nice mince," said Mr. Fairthorn, with a sensual movement of his lips. "One must think of dinner when one lives in the country—so little else to think of! Not that Mr. Darrell does, but then *he* is—granite!"

"Still," said Lionel, smiling, "I do not get my answer. Why was the house uncompleted? and why did Mr. Darrell retire from public life?"

"He took both into his head; and when a thing once gets there, it is no use asking why. But," added Fairthorn, and his innocent ugly face changed into an expression of earnest sadness—"but no doubt he had his reasons. He has reasons for all he does, only they lie far far away from what appears on the surface—far as that rivulet lies from its source! My dear young sir, Mr. Darrell has known griefs on which it does not become you and me to talk. He never talks of them. The least I can do for my benefactor is not to pry into his secrets, nor babble them out. And he is so kind—so good—never gets into a passion; but it is so awful to wound him—it gives him such pain; that's why he frightens me—frightens me horribly; and so he will you when you come to know him. Prodigious mind!—granite—overgrown with sensitive plants. Yes, a little music will do us both good."

Mr. Fairthorn screwed his flute—an exceedingly handsome one. He pointed out its beauties to Lionel—a present from Mr. Darrell last Christmas—and then he began. Strange thing, Art! especially music. Out of an art, a man be so trival you would mistake him for an imbecile—at best a grown infant. Put him into his art, and how high he soars above you! How quietly he enters into a heaven of which he has become a denizen, and, unlocking the gates with his golden key, admits you to follow, an humble, reverent visitor.

In his art Fairthorn was certainly a master, and the air he now played was exquisitely soft and plaintive; it accorded with the clouded yet quiet sky, with the lone but summer landscape, with Lionel's melancholic but not afflicted train of thought. The boy could only murmur, "Beautiful!" when the muscian ceased.

"It is an old air," said Fairthorn; "I don't think it is known. I found its scale scrawled down in a copy of the Eikon Basilike, with the name of *Joannes Darrell, Eq. Aurat*, written under it. That, by the date, was Sir John Darrell, the cavalier who fought for Charles I., father of the graceless Sir Ralph, who flourished under Charles II. Both their portraits are in the dining-room."

"Tell me something of the family; I know so little about it—not even how the Haughtons and Darrells seem to have been so long connected. I see by the portraits that the Haughton name was borne by former Darrells, then apparently dropped, now it is borne again by my cousin."

"He bears it only as a Christian name. Your grandfather was his sponsor. But he is nevertheless the head of your family."

"So he says. How?"

Fairthorn gathered himself up, his knees to his chin, and began in the tone of a guide who has got his lesson by heart, though it was not long before he warmed into his subject.

"The Darrells are supposed to have got their name from a knight in the reign of Edward III., who held the lists in a joust victoriously against all comers, and was called, or called himself, John the Dare-all; or, in old spelling, the Der-all! They were amongst the most powerful families in the country; their alliances were with the highest houses—Montfichets, Nevilles, Mowbrays; they descend through such marriages from the blood of Plantagenet kings. You'll find their names in Chronicles in the early French wars.

"Unluckily they attached themselves to the fortunes of Earl Warwick, the King-maker, to whose blood they were allied; their representative was killed in the fatal field of Barnet; their estates were of course confiscated; the sole son and heir of that ill-fated politician passed into the Low Countries, where he served as a soldier. His son and grandson

followed the same calling under foreign banners. But they must have kept up the love of the old land, for in the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII., the last male Darrell returned to England with some broad gold pieces saved by himself or his exiled fathers, bought some land in this county, in which the ancestral possessions had once been large, and built the present house, of a size suited to the altered fortunes of a race that, in a former age, had manned castles with retainers. The baptismal name of the soldier who thus partially refounded the old line in England was that now borne by your cousin, Guy—a name always favored by Fortune in the family annals; for in Elizabeth's time, from the rank of small gentry, to which their fortune alone lifted them since their return to their native land, the Darrells rose once more into wealth and eminence under a handsome young Sir Guy—we have his picture in black flowered velvet—who married the heiress of the Haughtons, a family that had grown rich under the Tudors, and was in high favor with the Maiden-Queen.

"This Sir Guy was befriended by Essex, and knighted by Elizabeth herself. Their old house was then abandoned for the larger mansion of the Haughtons, which had also the advantage of being nearer to the Court. The renewed prosperity of the Darrells was of short duration. The Civil Wars came on, and Sir John Darrell took the losing side. He escaped to France with his only son. He is said to have been an accomplished, melancholy man; and my belief is, that he composed that air which you justly admire for its mournful sweetness. He turned Roman Catholic, and died in a convent. But the son, Ralph, was brought up in France with Charles II. and other gay roisterers. On the return of the Stuart, Ralph ran off with the daughter of the Roundhead to whom his estates had been given, and, after getting them back, left his wife in the country, and made love to other men's wives in town. Shocking profligate! no fruit could thrive upon such a branch. He squandered all he could squander, and would have left his children beggars, but that he was providentially slain in a tavern brawl for boasting of a lady's favors to her husband's face. The husband suddenly stabbed him—no fair duello—for Sir Ralph was invincible with the small-sword. Still the family fortune was much dilapidated, yet still the Darrells lived in the fine house of the Haughtons, and left Fawley to the owls. But Sir Ralph's son, in his old age, married a second time, a young lady of high rank, an earl's daughter. He must have been very much in love with her, despite his age, for to win her consent or her father's he agreed to settle all the Haughton estates on her and the children she might bear to him. The smaller Darrell property had already been entailed on his son by his first marriage. This is how the family came to split. Old Darrell had children by his second wife; the eldest of those children took the Haughton name, and inherited the Haughton property. The son by the first marriage had nothing but Fawley, and the scanty domain round it. You descend from the second marriage, Mr. Darrell from the first. You understand now, my dear young sir?"

"Yes, a little; but I should very much like to know where those fine Haughton estates are now?"

"Where they are now? I can't say. They were once in Middlesex. Probably much of the land, as it was sold piecemeal, fell into small allotments, constantly changing hands. But the last relics of the property were, I know, bought on speculation by Cox the distiller; for, when we were in London, by Mr. Darrell's desire I went to look after them, and inquire if they could be repurchased. And I found that so rapid in a few years has been the prosperity of this great commercial country, that if one did buy them back, one would buy twelve villas, several streets, two squares, and a paragon! But as that sympton of national advancement, though a proud thought in itself, may not have any pleasing interest for you, I return to the Darrells. From the time in which the Haughton estate had parted from them, they settled back in their old house of Fawley. But they could never again hold up their heads with the noblemen and great squires in the county. As much as they could do to live at all upon the little patrimony; still the reminiscence of what they had been, made them maintain it jealously, and entail it rigidly. The eldest son would never have thought of any profession or business; the younger sons generally became soldiers, and being always a venturesome race, and having nothing particular to

make them value their existence, were no less generally killed off betimes.

"The family became thoroughly obscure, slipped out of place in the county, seldom rose to be even justices of the peace, never contrived to marry heiresses again, but only the daughters of some neighboring parson or squire as poor as themselves, but always of gentle blood. Oh, they were as proud as Spaniards in that respect! So from father to son, each generation grew obscurer and poorer; for, entail the estate as they might, still some settlements on it were necessary, and no settlements were ever brought into it; and thus entails were cut off to admit some new mortgage, till the rent-roll was somewhat less than £300 a-year when Mr. Darrell's father came into possession. Yet somehow or other he got to college, where no Darrell had been since the time of the Glorious Revolution, and was a learned man and an antiquary—A GREAT ANQUARY! You may have read his works. I know there is one copy of them in the British Museum, and there is another here, but that copy Mr. Darrell keeps under lock and key."

"I am ashamed to say I don't even know the titles of those works."

"There were 'Popular Ballads on the Wars of the Roses;' 'Darelliana,' consisting of traditional and other memorials of the Darrell family; 'Inquiry into the Origin of Legends connected with Dragons;' 'Hours amongst Monumental Brasses,' and other ingenious lucubrations above the taste of the vulgar; some of them were even read at the Royal Society of Antiquaries. They cost much to print and publish. But I have heard my father, who was his bailiff, say that he was a pleasant man, and was fond of reciting old scraps of poetry, which he did with great energy; indeed, Mr. Darrell declares that it was the noticing, in his father's animated and felicitous elocution, the effects that voice, look, and delivery can give to words, which made Mr. Darrell himself the fine speaker he is. But I can only recollect the antiquary as a very majestic gentleman, with a long pigtail—awful, rather, not so much so as his son, but still awful—and so sad-looking; you would not have recovered you spirits for a week if you had seen him, especially when the old house wanted repairs, and he was thinking how he could pay for them!"

"Was M. Darrell, the present one, an only child?"

"Yes, and much with his father, whom he loved most dearly, and to this day he sighs if he has to mention his father's name! He has old Mr. Darrell's portrait over the chimney-piece in his own reading-room; and he had it in his own library in Carlton Gardens. Our Mr. Darrel's mother was very pretty, even as I remember her: she died when he was about ten years old. And she too was a relation of yours—a Haughton by blood; but perhaps you will be ashamed of her, when I say she was a governess in a rich mercantile family. She had been left an orphan. I believe old Mr. Darrell (not that he was old then) married her because the Haughtons could or would do nothing for her, and because she was much snubbed and put upon, as I am told governesses usually are—married her because, poor as he was, he was still the head of both families, and bound to do what he could for decayed scions! The first governess a Darrell ever married, but no true Darrell would have called *that* a *mésalliance*, since she was still a Haughton and 'Fors non mutat genus'—Chance does not change race."

"But how comes it that the Haughtons, my grandfather Haughton, I suppose, would do nothing for his own kinswoman?"

"It was not your grandfather, Robert Haughton, who was a generous man—he was then a mere youngster, hiding himself for debt—but your great-grandfather, who was a hard man, and on the turf. He never had money to give—only money for betting. He left the Haughton estates sadly dipped. But when Robert succeeded, he came forward, was godfather to our Mr. Darrell, insisted on sharing the expense of sending him to Eton, where he became greatly distinguished; thence to Oxford, where he increased his reputation; and would probably have done more for him, only Mr. Darrell, once his foot on the ladder, wanted no help to climb to the top."

"Then my grandfather, Robert, still had the Haughton estates? Their last relics had not been yet transmuted by Mr. Cox into squares and a paragon?"

"No; the grand old mansion, though much dilapidated, with its park, though stripped of saleable timber, was still left with a rental from farms that still appertained to the resi-

dence, which would have sufficed a prudent man for the luxuries of life, and allowed a reserve fund to clear off the mortgages gradually. Abstinence and self-denial for one or two generations would have made a property, daily rising in value as the metropolis advanced to its outskirts, a princely estate for a third. But Robert Haughton, though not on the turf, had a grand way of living; and while Guy Darrell went into the law to make a small patrimony a large fortune, your father, my dear young sir, was put into the Guards to reduce a large patrimony—into Mr. Cox's distillery."

Lionel colored, but remained silent.

Fairthorn, who was as unconscious in his zest of narrator, that he was giving pain as an entomologist in his zest for collecting, when he pins a live moth into his cabinet, resumed: "Your father and Guy Darrell were warm friends as boys and youths. Guy was the elder of the two, and Charlie Haughton (I beg your pardon, he was always called Charlie) looked up to him as to an elder brother. Many's the scrape Guy got him out of; and many a pound, I believe, when Guy had some funds of his own, did Guy lend to Charlie."

"I am very sorry to hear that," said Lionel, sharply.

Fairthorn looked frightened. "I'm afraid I have made a blunder. Don't tell Mr. Darrell."

"Certainly not; I promise. But how came my father to need this aid, and how came they at last to quarrel?"

"Your father Charlie became a gay young man about town, and very much the fashion. He was like you in person, only his forehead was lower, and his eye not so steady. Mr. Darrell studied the law in Chambers. When Robert Haughton died, what with his debts, what with his father's, and what with Charlie's post-obits and I O U's, there seemed small chance indeed of saving the estate to the Haughtons. But then Mr. Darrell looked close into matters, and with such skill did he settle them that he removed the fear of foreclosure; and what with increasing the rental here and there, and replacing old mortgages by new at less interest, he contrived to extract from the property an income of nine hundred pounds a-year to Charlie (three times the income Darrell had inherited himself), where before it had seemed that the debts were more than the assets. Foreseeing how much the land would rise in value, he then earnestly implored Charlie (who unluckily had the estate in fee-simple, as Mr. Darrell had this, to sell if he pleased) to live on his income, and in a few years a part of the property might be sold for building purposes, on terms that would save all the rest, with the old house in which Darrells and Haughtons both had once reared generations.

"Charlie promised, I know, and I've no doubt, my dear young sir, quite sincerely—but men are not granite! He took to gambling, incurred debts of honor, sold the farms one by one, resorted to usurers, and one night, after playing six hours at piquet, nothing was left for him but to sell all that remained to Mr. Cox the distiller, unknown to Mr. Darrell, who was then married himself, working hard, and living quite out of news of the fashionable world. Then Charlie Haughton sold out of the Guards, spent what he got for his commission, went into the Line; and finally, in a country town, in which I don't think he was quartered, but, having gone there on some sporting speculation, was unwillingly detained—married—"

"My mother!" said Lionel, haughtily; "and the best of women she is. What then?"

"Nothing, my dear young sir—nothing, except that Mr. Darrell never forgave it. He has his prejudices; this marriage shocked one of them."

"Prejudice against my poor mother! I always supposed so! I wonder why? The most simple-hearted, inoffensive, affectionate woman."

"I have not a doubt of it; but it is beginning to rain. Let us go home. I should like some luncheon; it breaks the day."

"Tell me first why Mr. Darrell has a prejudice against my mother. I don't think that he has even seen her. Unaccountable caprice. Shocked him, too—what a word! Tell me—I beg—I insist."

"But you know," said Fairthorn, half piteously, half snappishly, "that Mrs. Haughton was the daughter of a linendraper, and her father's money got Charlie out of the county jail; and Mr. Darrell said, 'Sold even your name!' My father heard him say it in the hall at Fawley. Mr. Darrell was there during a long vacation, and your father came to see

him. Your father fired up, and they never saw each other, I believe, again."

Lionel remained still as if thunder-stricken. Something in his mother's language and manner had at times made him suspect that she was not so well born as his father. But it was not the discovery that she was a tradesman's daughter that galled him; it was the thought that his father was bought for the altar out of the county jail! It was those cutting words, "Sold even your name." His face, before very crimson, became livid; his head sunk on his breast. He walked towards the old gloomy house by Fairthorn's side, as one who, for the first time in life, feels on his heart the leaden weight of an hereditary shame.

CHAPTER VI.

Showing how sinful it is in a man who does not care for his honor to beget children.

When Lionel saw Mr. Fairthorn devoting his intellectual being to the contents of a cold chicken-pie, he silently stepped out of the room and slunk away into a thick copse at the farthest end of the paddock. He longed to be alone. The rain descended, not heavily, but in penetrating drizzle; he did not feel it, or rather he felt glad that there was no gaudy mocking sunlight. He sate down forlorn in the hollows of a glen which the copse covered, and buried his face in his clapsed hands.

Lionel Haughton, as the reader may have noticed, was no premature man—a manly boy, but still a habitant of the twilight, dreamy, shadow-land of boyhood. Noble elements were stirring fitfully within him, but their agencies were crude and undeveloped. Sometimes, through the native acuteness of his intellect, he apprehended truths quickly and truly as a man—then, again, through the warm haze of undisciplined tenderness, or the raw mists of that sensitive pride in which objects, small in themselves, loom large with undetected outlines, he fell back into the passionate dimness of a child's reasoning.

He was intensely ambitious; Quixotic in the point of honor; dauntless in peril, but morbidly trembling at the very shadow of disgrace, as a foal, destined to be the war-horse, and trample down levelled steel, starts in its tranquil pastures at the rustling of a leaf. Glowingly romantic, but not inclined to vent romance in literary creations, his feelings were the more high-wrought and enthusiastic because they had no outlet in poetic channels. Most boys of great ability and strong passion write verses—it is nature's relief to brain and heart at the critical turning age. Most boys thus gifted do so; a few do not, and out of those few Fate selects the great men of action—those large luminous characters that stamp poetry on the world's prosaic surface. Lionel had in him the pith and substance of Fortune's grand nobodies, who become Fame's abrupt somebodies when the chances of life throw suddenly in their way a noble something, to be ardently coveted and boldly won. But I repeat, as yet he was a boy—so he sate there, his hands before his face, an unreasoning self-torturer. He knew now why this haughty Darrell had written with so little tenderness and respect to his beloved mother.

Darrell looked on her as the cause of his ignoble kinsman's "sale of name;" nay, most probably ascribed to her not the fond girlish love which levels all disparities of rank, but the vulgar cold-blooded design to exchange her father's bank-notes for a marriage beyond her station. And he was the debtor to this supercilious creditor, as his father had been before him! His father! till then he had been so proud of that relationship. Mrs. Haughton had not been happy with her captain; his confirmed habits of wild dissipation had embittered her union, and at last worn away her wifely affections. But she had tended and nursed him in his last illness as the lover of her youth; and though occasionally she hinted at his faults, she ever spoke of him as the ornament of all society—poor, it is true, harassed by unfeeling creditors, but the finest of fine gentlemen. Lionel had never heard from her of the ancestral estates sold for a gambling debt; never from her of the county jail nor the mercenary *mésalliance*. In boyhood, before we have any cause to be proud of ourselves, we are so proud of our fathers, if we have a decent excuse for it. Of his father could Lionel Haughton be proud now?

And Darrell was cognizant of his paternal disgrace—had taunted his father in yonder old hall—for what?—the marriage from which

Lionel sprung! The hands grew tighter and tighter before that burning face. He did not weep, as he had done in Vance's presence at a thought much less galling. Not that tears would have misbecome him. Shallow judges of human nature as they who think that tears in themselves ever misbecome boy, or even man. Well did the sternest of Roman writers place the arch distinction of humanity, aloft from all meaner of heaven's creatures, in the prerogative of tears! Sooner mayest thou trust thy purse to a professional pickpocket than give loyal friendship to the man who boasts of eyes to which the heart never mounts in dew? Only, when man weeps he should be alone—not because tears are weak, but because they should be sacred. Tears are akin to prayers. Pharisees parade prayer! impostors parade tears. O Pegasus, Pegasus—softly, softly—thou hast hurried me off amidst the clouds: drop me gently down—there, by the side of the motionless boy in the shadowy glen.

CHAPTER VII.

Lionel Haughton, having hitherto much improved his chance of fortune, decides the question, "What will he do with it?"

"I HAVE been seeking you everywhere," said a well-known voice; and a hand rested lightly on Lionel's shoulder. The boy looked up, startled, but yet heavily, and saw Guy Darrell, the last man on earth he could have desired to see. "Will you come in for a few minutes? you are wanted."

"What for? I would rather stay here. Who can want me?"

Darrell, struck by the words, and the sullen tone in which they were uttered, surveyed Lionel's face for an instant, and replied in a voice involuntarily more kind than usual—

"Some one very commonplace, but since the Picts went out of fashion, very necessary to mortals the most sublime. I ought to apologize for his coming. You threatened to leave me yesterday because of a defect in your wardrobe. Mr. Fairthorn wrote to my tailor to hasten hither and repair it. He is here. I commend him to your custom! Don't despise him because he makes for a man of my remote generation. Tailors are keen observers, and do not grow out of date so quickly as politicians."

The words were said with a playful good-humor very uncommon to Mr. Darrell. The intention was obviously kind and kinsmanlike. Lionel sprang to his feet; his lip curled, his eye flashed, and his crest rose.

"No, sir; I will not stoop to this! I will not be clothed by your charity—yours! I will not submit to an implied taunt upon my poor mother's ignorance of the manners of a rank to which she was not born! You said we might not like each other, and if so, we should part for ever. I do not like you, and I will go!" He turned abruptly, and walked to the house—magnanimous. If Mr. Darrell had not been the most singular of men, he might well have been offended. As it was, though few were less accessible to surprise, he was surprised. But offended? Judge for yourself.

"I declare," muttered Guy Darrell, gazing on the boy's receding figure,—"I declare that I almost feel as if I could once again be capable of an emotion! I hope I am not going to like that boy! The old Darrell blood in his veins, surely. I might have spoken as he did at his age, but I must have had some better reason for it. What did I say to justify such an explosion! *Quid feci?—ubi lapsus?* Gone, no doubt, to pack up his knapsack, and take the Road to Ruin! Shall I let him go? Better for me, if I am really in danger of liking him; and so be at his mercy to sting—what? my heart! I defy him; it is dead. No; he shall not go thus. I am the head of our joint houses. Houses! I wish he *had* a house, poor boy! And his grandfather loved me. Let him go! I will beg his pardon first; and he may dine in his drawers if that will settle the matter!"

Thus, no less magnanimous than Lionel, did this misanthropical man follow his ungracious cousin. "Ha!" cried Darrell, suddenly, as, approaching the threshold, he saw Mr. Fairthorn at the dining-room window occupied in nibbing a pen upon an ivory thumb-stall—"I have hit it! That abominable Fairthorn has been shedding its prickles! How could I trust flesh and blood to such a bramble? I'll know what it was this instant!" Vain menace! No sooner did Mr. Fairthorn catch glimpse of Darrell's countenance within ten yards of the porch, than, his conscience taking alarm, he

rushed incontinent from the window—the apartment—and, ere Darrell could fling open the door, was lost in some lair—"nullis penetrabilis astris"—in that sponge-like and cavernous abode, wherewith benignant Providence had suited the locality to the creature.

CHAPTER VIII.

New imbroglio in that ever-recurring, never to be settled question, "What will he do with it?"

With a dissappointed glare, and a baffled shrug of the shoulder, Mr. Darrell turned from the dining-room, and passed up the stairs to Lionel's chamber, opened the door quickly and, extending his hand, said, in that tone which had disarmed the wrath of ambitious factions, and even (if fame lie not) once seduced from the hostile Treasury-bench a placeman's vote, "I must have hurt your feelings, and I come to beg your pardon!"

But before this time Lionel's proud heart, in which ungrateful anger could not long find room, had smitten him for so ill a return to well-meant and not indelicate kindness. And, his wounded egotism appeased by its very outburst, he had called to mind Fairthorn's allusions to Darrell's secret griefs that must have been indeed stormy so to have revulsed the currents of a life. And, despite those griefs, the great man had spoken playfully to him—playfully in order to make light of obligations. So when Guy Darrell now extended that hand, and stooped to that apology, Lionel was fairly overcome. Tears, before refused, now found irresistible way. The hand he could not take, but, yielding to his yearning impulse, he threw his arms fairly round his host's neck, leant his young cheek upon that granite breast, and sobbed out incoherent words of passionate repentance—honest, venerating affection. Darrell's face changed, looking for a moment wondrous soft—and then, as by an effort of supreme self-control, it became severely placid. He did not return that embrace, but certainly he in no way repelled it; nor did he trust himself to speak till the boy had exhausted the force of his first feelings, and had turned to dry his tears.

Then he said, with a soothing sweetness: "Lionel Haughton, you have the heart of a gentleman that can never listen to a frank apology for unintentional wrong, but what it springs forth to take the blame to itself, and return apology tenfold. Enough! A mistake, no doubt, on both sides. More time must elapse before either can truly say that he does not like the other. Meanwhile," added Darrell, with almost a laugh—and that concluding query showed that even on trifles the man was bent upon either forcing or stealing his own will upon others,—"meanwhile, must I send away the tailor?"

I need not repeat Lionel's answer.

CHAPTER IX.

Darrell: mystery in his past life. What has he done with it?

Some days passed—each day varying little from the other. It was the habit of Darrell, If he went late to rest, to rise early. He never allowed himself more than five hours' sleep. A man greater than Guy Darrell—Sir Walter Raleigh—carved from the solid day no larger a slice for Morpheus. And it was this habit perhaps, yet more than temperance in diet, which preserved to Darrell his remarkable youthfulness of aspect and frame, so that at fifty-two he looked, and really was, younger than many a strong man of thirty-five. For, certain it is, that on entering middle life, he who would keep his brain clear, his step elastic, his muscles from fleshiness, his nerves from tremor—in a word, retain his youth in spite of the register—should beware of long slumbers. Nothing ages like laziness. The hours before breakfast Darrell devoted first to exercise, whatever the weather—next to his calm scientific pursuits. At ten o'clock punctually he rode out alone, and seldom returned till late in the afternoon. Then he would stroll forth with Lionel into devious woodlands, or lounge with him along the margin of the lake, or lie down on the tedded grass, call the boy's attention to the insect populace which sports out its happy life in the summer months, and treat of the ways and habits of each varying species, with a quaint learning, half humorous, half grave.

He was a minute observer, and an accom-

plished naturalist. His range of knowledge was, indeed, amazingly large for a man who has had to pass his best years in a dry and absorbing study: necessarily not so profound in each section as that of a special professor, but if the science was often on the surface, the thoughts he deduced from what he knew were as often original and deep. A maxim of his, which he dropped out one day to Lionel in his careless manner, but pointed diction, may perhaps illustrate his own practice and its results: "Never think it enough to have solved the problem started by another mind till you have deduced from it a corollary of your own."

After dinner, which was not over till past eight o'clock, they always adjourned to the library, Fairthorn vanishing into a recess, Darrell, and Lionel each with his several book, then an air on the flute, and each to his own room before eleven. No life could be more methodical; yet to Lionel it had an animating charm, for his interest in his host daily increased, and varied his thoughts with perpetual occupation. Darrell, on the contrary, while more kind and cordial, more cautiously on his guard not to wound his young guest's susceptibilities than he had been before the quarrel and its reconciliation, did not seem to feel for Lionel the active interest which Lionel felt for him.

He did not, as most clever men are apt to do in their intercourse with youth, attempt to draw him out, plumb his intellect, or guide his tastes. If he was at times instructive, it was because talk fell on subjects on which it pleased himself to touch, and in which he could not speak without involuntarily instructing. Nor did he ever allure the boy to talk of his school-days, of his friends, of his predilections, his hopes, his future. In short, had you observed them together, you would have never supposed they were connections—that one could and ought to influence and direct the career of the other. You would have said the host certainly liked the guest, as any man would like a promising, warm-hearted, high-spirited, graceful boy, under his own roof for a short time, but who felt that that boy was nothing to him—would soon pass from his eye—form friends, pursuits, aims—with which he could be in no way commingled, for which he shoud be wholly irresponsible.

There was also this peculiarity in Darrell's conversation; if he never spoke of his guest's past and future, neither did he ever do more than advert in the most general terms to his own. Of that grand stage, on which he had been so brilliant an actor, he imparted no reminiscences; of those great men, the leaders of his age, with whom he had mingled familiarly, he told no anecdotes. Equally silent was he as to the earlier steps in his career, the modes by which he had studied, the accidents of which he had seized advantage—silent there as upon the causes he had gained, or the debates he had adorned. Never could you have supposed that this man, still in the prime of public life, had been the theme of journals and the boast of party. Neither did he ever, as men who talk easily at their own hearths are prone to do, speak of projects in the future, even though the projects be no vaster than the planting of a tree or the alteration of a parterre—projects with which rural life so copiously and so innocently teems. The past seemed as if it had left to him no memory, the future as if it stored for him no desire. But did the past leave no memory? Why then at intervals would the book slide from his eye, the head sink upon his breast, and a shade of unutterable dejection darken over the grand beauty of that strong stern countenance?

Still that dejection was not morbidly fed and encouraged, for he would fling it from him with a quick impatient gesture of the head, resume the book resolutely, or change it for another which induced fresh trains of thought, or look over Lionel's shoulder, and make some subtle comment on his choice, or call on Fairthorn for the flute; and in a few minutes the face was severely serene again. And be it here said, that it is only in the poetry of young gentlemen, or the prose of lady novelists, that a man in good health, and of sound intellect, wears the livery of unvarying gloom. However great his causes of sorrow, he does not for ever parade its ostentatious mourning, nor follow the hearse of his hopes with the long face of an undertaker. He will still have his gleams of cheerfulness—his moments of good humor. The old smile will sometimes light the eye, and awake the old playfulness of the lip. But what a great and critical sorrow does leave behind is often far worse than the sorrow itself has been.

It is a change in the inner man, which strands him, as Guy Darrell seemed stranded, upon the shoal of the Present; which the more he strive manfully to bear his burden, warns him the more from dwelling on the Past; and the more impressively it enforce the lesson of the vanity of human wishes, strikes the more from his reckoning illusive hopes in the Future. Thus out of our threefold existence two parts are annihilated—the what has been—the what shall be. We fold our arms, stand upon the petty and steep cragstone, which alone looms out of the Measureless Sea, and say to ourselves, looking neither backward nor beyond, "Let us bear what is;" and so for the moment the eye can lighten and the lip can smile.

Lionel could no longer glean from Mr. Fairthorn any stray hints upon the family records. That gentleman had evidently been reprimanded for indiscretion, or warned against its repetition, and he became as reserved and mum as if he had just emerged from the cave of Trophonius. Indeed he shunned trusting himself again alone to Lionel, and affecting a long arrear of correspondence on behalf of his employer, left the lad during the forenoons to solitary angling, or social intercourse with the swans and the tame doe. But from some mystic concealment within doors would often float far into the open air the melodies of that magic flute; and the boy would glide back, along the dark-red mournful walls of the old house, or the futile pomp of pilastered arcades in the incompleted new one, to listen to the sound: listening, *he*, blissful boy, forgot the present; *he* seized the unchallenged royalty of his years. For him no rebels in the past conspired with poison to the wine-cup, murder to the sleep. No deserts in the future, arresting the march of ambition, said—"Here are sands for a pilgrim, not fields for a conqueror."

CHAPTER X.

In which chapter the History quietly moves on to the next.

THUS nearly a week had gone, and Lionel began to feel perplexed as to the duration of his visit. Should he be the first to suggest departure? Mr. Darrell rescued him from that embarrassment. On the seventh day, Lionel met his host in a lane near the house, returning from his habitual ride. The boy walked home by the side of the horseman, patting the steed, admiring its shape, and praising the beauty of another saddle-horse, smaller and slighter, which he had seen in the paddock exercised by a groom. "Do you ever ride that chestnut! I think it even handsomer than this."

"Half our preferences are due to the vanity they flatter. Few can ride this horse—any one, perhaps, that."

"There speaks the Dare-all?" said Lionel, laughing.

The host did not look displeased.

"Where no difficulty, there no pleasure," said he in his curt laconic diction. "I was in Spain two years ago. I had not an English horse there, so I bought that Andalusian jennet. What has served him at need, no *preux chevalier* would leave to the chance of ill-usage. So the jennet came with me to England. You have not been much accustomed to ride, I suppose?"

"Not much; but my dear mother thought I ought to learn. She pinched for a whole year to have me taught at a riding-school during one school vacation."

"Your mother's relations are, I believe, well off. Do they suffer her to pinch?"

"I do not know that she has relations living; she never speaks of them."

"Indeed!" This was the first question on home matters that Darrell had ever directly addressed to Lionel. He there dropped the subject, and said, after a short pause, "I was not aware that you are a horseman, or I would have asked you to accompany me; will you do so to-morrow, and mount the jennet?"

"Oh, thank you; I should like it so much."

Darrell turned abruptly away from the bright, grateful eyes. "I am only sorry," he added, looking aside, "that our excursions can be but few. On Friday next I shall submit to you a proposition; if you accept it, we shall part on Saturday—liking each other, I hope: speaking for myself, the experiment has not failed; and on yours?"

"On mine!—oh, Mr. Darrell, if I dared but tell you what recollections of yourself the experiment will bequeath to me!"

"Do not tell me, if they imply a compli-

ment," answered Darrell, with the low silvery laugh which so melodiously expressed indifference, and repelled affection. He entered the stable-yard, dismounted; and on returning to Lionel, the sound of the flute stole forth, as if from the eaves of the gabled roof. "Could the pipe of Horace's Faunus be sweeter than that flute?" said Darrell—

"'*Utcunque dulci, Tyndare, fistula, Valles*,' etc.

What a lovely ode that is! What knowledge of town life! what susceptibility to the rural! Of all the Latins, Horace is the only one with whom I could wish to have spent a week. but no! I could not have discussed the brief span of human life with locks steeped in Malobathran balm, and wreathed with that silly myrtle. Horace and I would have quarrelled over the first heady bowl of Massie. We never can quarrell now! Blessed subject and poet-laureate of Queen Proserpine, and, I dare swear, the most gentlemanlike poet she ever received at court, henceforth his task is to uncoil the asps from the brows of Alecto, and arrest the ambitious Orion from the chase after visionary lions."

CHAPTER XI.

Showing that if a good face is a letter of recommendation, a good heart is a letter of credit.

THE next day they rode forth, host and guest, and that ride proved an eventful crisis in the fortune of Lionel Haughton. Hitherto I have elaborately dwelt on the fact that, whatever the regard Darrell might feel for him, it was a regard apart from that interest which accepts a responsibility, and links to itself a fate. And even if, at moments, the powerful and wealthy man had felt that interest, he had thrust it from him. That he meant to be generous was indeed certain, and this he had typically shown in a very trite matter-of-fact way. The tailor, whose visit had led to such perturbation, had received instructions beyond the mere supply of the raiment for which he had been summoned; and a large patent portmanteau, containing all that might constitute the liberal outfit of a young man in the rank of gentleman, had arrived at Fawley, and amazed and moved Lionel, whom Darrell had by this time thoroughly reconciled to the acceptance of benefits. The gift denoted this: "In recognizing you as kinsman, I shall henceforth provide for you as gentleman." Darrell indeed meditated applying for an appointment in one of the public offices, the settlement of a liberal allowance, and a parting shake of the hand, which should imply, "I have now behaved as becomes me; the rest belongs to you. We may never meet again. There is no reason why this good-by may not be for ever."

But in the course of that ride, Darrell's intentions changed. Wherefore? You will never guess! Nothing so remote as the distance between cause and effect, and the cause for the effect here was—poor little Sophy.

The day was fresh, with a lovely breeze, as the two riders rode briskly over the turf of rolling commons, with the feathery boughs of neighboring woodlands tossed joyously to and fro by the sportive summer wind. The exhilirating exercise and air raised Lionel's spirits, and released his tongue from all trammels; and when a boy is in high spirits, ten to one but he grows a frank egotist, feels the teeming life of his individuality, and talks about himself.

Quite unconsciously, Lionel, rattled out gay anecdotes of his school-days; his quarrel with a demoniacal usher; how he ran away; what befell him; how the doctor went after, and brought him back; how splendidly the doctor behaved—neither flogged nor expelled him, but after patient listening, while he rebuked the pupil, dismissed the usher, to the joy of the whole academy; how he fought the head boy in the school for calling the doctor a sneak; how, licked twice, he yet fought that head boy a third time, and licked him; how, when head boy himself, he had roused the whole school into a civil war, dividing the boys into Cavaliers and Roundheads; how clay was rolled out into canon-balls and pistol-shot, sticks shaped into swords; the play-ground disturfed to construct fortifications; how a slovenly stout boy enacted Cromwell; how he himself was elevated into Prince Rupert; and how, reversing all history, and infamously degrading Cromwell, Rupert would not consent to be beaten; and Cromwell, at the last, disabled by an untoward blow across the knuckles, ignomini-

ously yielded himself prisoner, was tried by a court-martial, and sentenced to be shot!

"To all this rubbish did Darrell incline his patient ear—not encouraging, not interrupting, but sometimes stifling a sigh at the sound of Lionel's merry laugh, or the sight of his fair face, with heightened glow on its cheeks, and his long silky hair, worthy the name of love-locks, blown by the wind from the open loyal features, which might well have graced the portrait of some youthful Cavalier. On bounded the Spanish jennet, on rattled the boy rider. He had left school now, in his headlong talk; he was describing his first friendship with Frank Vance, as a lodger at his mother's; how example fired him, and he took to sketch-work and painting; how kindly Vance gave him lessons; how at one time he wished to be a painter; how much the mere idea of such a thing vexed his mother, and how little she was moved when he told her that Titian was of a very ancient family, and that Francis I., archetype of gentlemen, visited Leonardo da Vinci's sick-bed; and that Henry VIII. had said to a pert lord who had snubbed Holbein, "I can make a lord any day, but I cannot make a Holbein;" how Mrs. Haughton still confounded all painters in the general image of the painter and plumber who had cheated her so shamefully in the renewed window-sashes and redecorated walls, which Time and the four children of an Irish family had made necessary to the letting of the first floor.

And these playful allusions to the maternal ideas were still not irreverent, but contrived so as rather to prepossess Darrell in Mrs. Haughton's favor by bringing out traits of a simple natural mother, too proud, perhaps, of her only son, not caring what she did, how she worked, so that he might not lose caste as a born Haughton. Darrell understood, and nooded his head approvingly.—"Certainly," he said, speaking almost for the first time, "fame confers a rank above that of gentlemen and of kings; and as soon as she issues her patent of nobility, it matters not a straw whether the recipient be the son of a Bourbon or a tallow-chandler. But if Fame withhold her patent—if a well-born man paint aldermen, and be not famous (and I daresay you would have been neither a Titian nor a Holbein), why, he might as well be a painter and a plumber, and has a better chance, even of bread and cheese, by standing to his post as gentleman. Mrs. Haughton was right, and I respect her."

"Quite right. If I lived to the age of Methuselah, I could not paint a head like Frank Vance."

"And even he is not famous yet. Never heard of him."

"He will be famous—I am sure of it; and if you lived in London, you would hear of him even now. Oh, sir! such a portrait as he painted the other day! But I must tell you all about it." And therewith Lionel plunged at once, *medias res*, into the brief broken epic of little Sophy, and the eccentric infirm Belisarius for whose sake she first toiled and then begged; with what artless elouqence he brought out the colors of the whole story—now its humor, now its pathos; with what beautifying sympathy he adorned the image of the little vagrant girl, with her mien of gentle-woman and her simplicity of child; the river-excursion to Hampton Court; her still delight; how annoyed he felt when Vance seemed ashamed of her before those fine people; the orchard scene in which he had read Darrell's letter, that, for the time, drove her from the foremost place in his thoughts; the return home, the parting, her wistful look back, the visit to the Cobbler's next day—even her farewell gift, the nursery poem, with the lines written on the fly-leaf, he had them by heart! Darrell, the grand advocate, felt he could not have produced on a jury, with those elements, the effect which that boy-narrator produced on his granite self.

"And, oh sir!" cried Lionel, checking his horse, and even arresting Darrell's with bold right hand—"oh," said he, as he brought his moist and pleading eyes in full battery upon the shaken fort to which he had mined his way—"oh, sir! you are so wise, and rich, and kind, do rescue that poor child from the penury and hardships of such a life! If you could but have seen and heard her! She could never have been born to it! You look away—I offend you! I have no right to tax your benevolence for others; but, instead of showering favors upon me, so little would suffice for her!—if she were but above positive want, with that old man (she would not be happy without him), safe in such a cottage as you give to your own peasants! I am a man,

or shall be one soon; I can wrestle with the world, and force my way somehow; but that delicate child, a village show, or a beggar on the high-road!—no mother, no brother, no one but that broken-down cripple, leaning upon her arm as his crutch. I cannot bear to think of it. I am sure I shall meet her again somewhere; and when I do, may I not write to you, and will you not come to her help? Do speak—do say 'Yes,' Mr. Darrell."

The rich man's breast heaved slightly; he closed his eyes, but for a moment. There was a short and sharp struggle with his better self, and the better self conquered.

"Let go my reins—see, my horse puts down his ears—he may do you a mischief. Now canter on—you shall be satisfied. Give me a moment to—to unbutton my coat—it is too tight for me."

CHAPTER XII.

Guy Darrell gives way to an impulse, and quickly decides what he will do with it.

"LIONEL HAUGHTON," said Guy Darrell, regaining his young cousin's side, and speaking in a firm and measured voice, "I have to thank you for one very happy minute; the sight of a heart so fresh in the limpid purity of goodness is a luxury you cannot comprehend till you have come to my age; journeyed, like me, from Dan to Beersheba, and found all barren. Heed me: if you had been half-a-dozen years older, and this child for whom you plead had been a fair young woman, perhaps just as innocent, just as charming—more in peril—my benevolence would have lain as dormant as a stone. A young man's foolish sentiment, for a pretty girl. As your true friend, I should have shrugged my shoulders and said, 'Beware!' Had I been your father, I should have taken alarm, and frowned. I should have seen the sickly romance, which ends in dupes or deceivers. But at your age, you, hearty, genial, and open-hearted boy—you, caught but by the chivalrous compassion for helpless female childhood—oh that you *were* my son—oh that my dear father's blood were in those knightly veins! I had a son once! God took him;" the strong man's lips quivered—he hurried on. "I felt there was manhood in you, when you wrote to fling my churlish favors in my teeth—when you would have left my roof-tree in a burst of passion which might be foolish, but was nobler than the wisdom of calculating submission—manhood, but only perhaps man's pride as man—man's heart not less cold than winter.

"To-day you have shown me something far better than pride;—that nature which constitutes the Heroic Temperament is completed by two attributes—unflinching purpose, disinterested humanity. I know not yet if you have the first; you reveal to me the second. Yes! I accept the duties you propose to me; I will do more than leave to you the chance of discovering this poor child. I will direct my solicitor to take the right steps to do so. I will see that she is safe from the ills you fear for her. Lionel; more still, I am impatient till I write to Mrs. Haughton. I did her wrong. Remember, I have never seen her. I resented in her the cause of my quarrel with your father, who was once dear to me. Enough of that. I disliked the tone of her letters to me. I disliked it in the mother of a boy who had Darrell blood; other reasons too—let them pass."

But in providing for your education, I certainly thought her relations provided for her support. She never asked me for help there; and, judging of her hastily, I thought she would not have scrupled to do so, if my help there had not been forestalled. You have made me understand her better; and at all events, three-fourths of what we are in boyhood most of us owe to our mothers! You are frank, fearless, affectionate, a gentleman. I respect the mother who has such a son."

Certainly praise was rare upon Darrell's lips, but when he did praise, he knew how to do it! And no man will ever command others who has not by nature that gift! It cannot be learned. Art and experience can only refine its expression.

CHAPTER XIII.

He who sees his heir in his own child, carries his eye over hopes and possessions lying far beyond his gravestone, viewing his life, even here, as a period but closed with a comma. He who sees his heir in another man's child, sees the full stop at the end of the sentence.

LIONEL'S departure was indefinitely postponed; nothing more was said of it. Mean-

while Darrell's manner towards him underwent a marked change. The previous indifference the rich kinsman had hitherto shown as ot the boy's past life, and the peculiarities of his intellect and character, wholly vanished. He sought now, on the contrary, to plumb thoroughly the more hidden depths which lurk in the nature of every human being, and which, in Lionel, were the more difficult to discern from the vivacity and candor which covered with so smooth and charming a surface a pride tremulously sensitive, and an ambition that startled himself in the hours when solitude and reverie reflect upon the visions of Youth the giant outline of its own hopes.

Darrell was not dissatisfied with the results of his survey; yet often, when perhaps most pleased, a shade would pass over his countenance; and had a woman who loved him been by to listen, she would have heard the short slight sigh which came and went too quickly for the duller sense of man's friendship to recognize it as the sound of sorrow.

In Darrell himself, thus insensibly altered, Lionel daily discovered more to charm his interest and deepen his affection. In this man's nature there were, indeed, such wondrous under-currents of sweetness, so suddenly gushing forth, so suddenly vanishing again! And exquisite in him were the traits of that sympathetic tact which the world calls fine breeding, but which comes only from a heart at once chivalrous and tender, the more bewitching in Darrell from their contrast with a manner usually cold, and a bearing so stamped with masculine, self-willed, haughty power. Thus days went on as if Lionel had become a very child of the house. But his sojourn was in truth drawing near to a close not less abrupt and unexpected than the turn in his host's humors to which he owed the delay of his departure.

One bright afternoon, as Darrell was standing at the window of his private study, Fairthorn, who had crept in on some matter of business, looked at his countenance long and wistfully, and then, shambling up to his side, put one hand on his shoulder with a light timid touch, and, pointing with the other to Lionel, who was lying on the grass in front of the casement reading the *Faerie Queen*, said, "Why do you take him to your heart if he does not comfort it?"

Darrell winced, and answered gently, "I did not know you were in the room. Poor Fairthorn; thank you!"

"Thank me!—what for?"

"For a kind thought. So, then, you like the boy?"

"Mayn't I like him?" asked Fairthorn, looking rather frightened; "surely you do!"

"Yes I *like* him much; I am trying my best to *love* him. But, but"—Darrell turned quickly, and the portrait of his father over the mantelpiece came full upon his sight—an impressive, a haunting face—sweet and gentle, yet with the high narrow brow and arched nostril of pride, with restless melancholy eyes, and an expression that revealed the delicacy of intellect, but not its power. There was something forlorn, but imposing, in the whole effigy. As you continued to look at the countenance, the mournful attraction grew upon you. Truly a touching and a most lovable aspect. Darrell's eyes moistened.

"Yes, my father, it is so!" he said softly. "All my sacrifices were in vain. The race is not to be rebuilt! No grandchild of yours will succeed me—me, the last of the old line! Fairthorn, how *can* I love that boy? He may be my heir, and in his veins not a drop of my father's blood!"

"But he has the blood of your father's ancestors; and why must you think of him as your heir?—you, who, if you would but go again into the world, might yet find a fair wi——"

With such a stamp came Darrell's foot upon the floor, that the holy and conjugal monosyllable dropping from Fairthorn's lips was as much cut in two as if a shark had snapt it. Unspeakably frightened, the poor man sidled away, thrust himself behind a tall reading desk, and, peering aslant from that covert, whimpered out, "Don't, don't now, don't be so awful; I did not mean to offend, but I'm always saying something I did not mean; and really you look so young still (coaxingly), and, and——"

Darrell, the burst of rage over, had sunk upon a chair, his face bowed over his hands, and his breast heaving as if with suppressed sobs.

The musician forgot his fear; he sprang forward, almost upsetting the tall desk; he flung himself on his knees at Darrell's feet,

and exclaimed in broken words, "Master, master, forgive me! Beast that I was! Do look up—do smile or else beat me—kick me."

Darrell's right hand slid gently from his face, and fell into Fairthorn's clasp.

"Hush, hush," muttered the man of granite; "one moment, and it will be over."

One moment! That might be but a figure of speech; yet before Lionel had finished half the canto that was plunging him into fairy-land, Darrell was standing by him with his ordinary tranquil mien; and Fairthorn's flute from behind the boughs of a neighboring lime-tree was breathing out an air as dulcet as if careless Fauns still piped in Arcady, and Grief were a far dweller on the other side of the mountains, of whom shepherds, reclining under summer leaves, speak as we speak of hydras and unicorns, and things in fable.

On, on swelled the mellow, mellow, witching music; and now the worn man with his secret sorrow, and the boy with his frank glad laugh, are passing away, side by side over the turf, with its starry and golden wild-flowers, under the boughs in yon Druid copse, from which they start the ringdove—farther and farther, still side by side, now out of sight, as if the dense green of the summer had closed around them like waves. But still the flute sounds on, and still they hear it, softer and softer as they go. Hark! do you not hear it—you?

CHAPTER XIV.

There are certain events which to each man's life are as comets to the earth, seemingly strange and erratic portents; distinct from the ordinary lights which guide our course and mark our seasons, yet true to their own laws, potent in their own influences. Philosophy speculates on their effects, and disputes upon their uses; men who do not philosophize regard them as special messengers and bodes of evil.

They came out of the little park into a by-lane; a vast tract of common land, yellow with furze, and undulated with swell and hollow, spreading in front; to their right the dark beechwoods, still beneath the weight of the July noon. Lionel had been talking about the *Faerie Queen*, knight-errantry, the sweet impossible dream-life that, safe from Time, glides by bower and hall, through magic forests and by witching caves, in the world of poet-books. And Darrell listened, and the flute-notes mingled with the atmosphere faint and far off, like voices from that world itself.

Out then they came, this broad waste land before them; and Lionel said merrily.

"But this is the very scene! Here the young knight, leaving his father's hall, would have checked his *destrier*, glancing wistfully now over that green wild which seems so boundless, now to the 'umbrageous horror' of those breathless woodlands, and questioned himself which way to take for adventure."

"Yes," said Darrell, coming out from his long reserve on all that concerned his past life—"Yes, and the gold of the gorse-blossoms tempted me; and I took the waste land." He paused a moment, and renewed: "And then, when I had known cities and men, and snatched romance from dull matter-of-fact, then I would have done as civilization does with romance itself—I would have enclosed the waste land for my own aggrandizement. Look," he continued, with a sweep of the hand round the width of prospect, "all that you see to the verge of the horizon, some fourteen years ago, was to have been thrown into the petty paddock we have just quitted, and serve as park round the house I was then building. Vanity of human wishes! What but the several proportions of their common folly distinguishes the baffled squire from the arrested conqueror? Man's characteristic cerebral organ must certainly be acquisitiveness."

"Was it his organ of acquisitiveness that moved Themistocles to boast that 'he could make a small state great?'"

"Well remembered ingeniously quoted," returned Darrell, with the polite bend of his stately head. "Yes, I suspect that the coveting organ had much to do with the boast. To build a name was the earliest dream of Themistocles, if we are to accept the anecdote that makes him say, 'The trophies of Miltiades would not suffer him to sleep.' To build a name, or to create a fortune, are but varying applications of one human passion. The desire of something we have not is the first of our childish remembrances; it matters not what form it takes, what object it longs for; still it is to acquire; it never deserts us while we live."

"And yet, if I might, I should like to ask,

what you now desire that you do not possess?"

"I—nothing; but I spoke of the living! I am dead. Only," added Darrell, with his silvery laugh, "I say, as poor Chesterfield said before me, 'it is a secret—keep it.'"

Lionel made no reply; the melancholy of the words saddened him: but Darrell's manner repelled the expression of sympathy or of interest; and the boy fell into conjecture—what had killed to the world this man's intellectual life?

And thus siletly they continued to wander on till the sound of the flute had long been lost to their ears. Was the musician playing still!

At length they came round to the other end of Fawley village, and Darrell again became animated.

"Perhaps," said he, returning to the subject of talk that had been abruptly suspended—"Perhaps the love of power is at the origin of each restless courtship of Fortune; yet, after all, who has power with less alloy than the village thane! With so little effort, so little thought, the man in the manor-house can make men in the cottage happier here below, and more fit for a hereafter yonder. In leaving the world I come from contest and pilgrimage, like our sires the Crusaders, to reign at home."

As he spoke, he entered one of the cottages. An old paralytic man was seated by the fire, hot though the July sun was out of door; and his wife, of the same age, and almost as helpless, was reading to him a chapter in the Old Testament—the fifth chapter in Genesis, containing the genealogy, age, and death of the patriarchs before the Flood. How the faces of the couple brightened when Darrell entered. "Master Guy!" said the old man, tremulously rising. The world-weary orator and lawyer was still Master Guy to him.

"Sit down, Matthew, and let me read a chapter." Darrell took the Holy Book, and read the Sermon on the Mount. Never had Lionel heard anything like that reading; the feeling which brought out the depth of the sense, the tones, sweeter than the flute, which clothed the divine words in music. As Darrell ceased, some beauty seemed gone from the day. He lingered a few minutes, talking kindly and familiarly, and then turned into another cottage, where lay a sick woman. He listened to her ailments, promised to send her something to do her good from his own stores, cheered up her spirits, and, leaving her happy, turned to Lionel with a glorious smile, that seemed to ask, "And is there not power in this?"

But it was the sad peculiarity of this remarkable man, that all his moods were subject to rapid and seemingly unaccountable variations. It was as if some great blow had fallen on the mainspring of his organization, and left its original harmony broken up into fragments, each impressive in itself, but running one into the other with an abrupt discord, as a harp played upon by the winds. For, after this evident effort at self-consolation or self-support, in soothing or strengthening others, suddenly Darrell's head fell again upon his breast, and he walked on, up the village lane, heeding no longer either the open doors of expectant cottagers, or the salutation of humble passers-by. "And I could have been so happy here!" he said suddenly. "Can I not be so yet? Ay, perhaps, when I am thoroughly old—tied to the world but by the thread of an hour.

"Old men do seem happy; behind them, all memories faint, save those of childhood and sprightly youth; before them, the narrow ford, and the sun dawning up through the clouds on the other shore. 'Tis the critical descent into age in which man is surely most troubled; griefs gone, still rankling; nor, strength yet in his limbs, passion yet in his heart, reconciled to what loom nearest in the prospect—the arm-chair and the palsied head. Well! life is a quaint puzzle. Bits the most incongruous join into each other, and the scheme thus gradually becomes symmetrical and clear; when, lo! as the infant claps his hands, and cries, 'See, see! the puzzle is made out!' all the pieces are swept back into the box—black box with the gilded nails. Ho! Lionel, look up; there is our village Church, and here, close at my right, the Churchyard!"

Now while Darrell and his young companion were directing their gaze to the right of the village lane, towards the small grey church—towards the sacred burial-ground in which, here and there amongst humbler graves, stood the monumental stone inscribed to the memory of some former Darrell, for whose remains the living sod had been preferred to the family

vault; while both slowly neared the funeral spot, and leant, silent and musing, over the rail that fenced it from the animals turned to graze on the sward of the surrounding green, —a foot-traveller, a stranger in the place, loitered on the threshold of the small wayside inn, about fifty yards off to the left of the lane, and looked hard at the still figures of the two kinsmen.

Turning then to the hostess, who was standing somewhat within the threshold, a glass of brandy-and-water in her hand (the third glass that stranger had called for during his half-hour's rest in the hostelry), quoth the man—

"The taller gentleman yonder is surely your squire, is he not? but who is the shorter and younger person?"

The landlady put forth her head.

"Oh! that is a relation of the squire's down on a visit, sir. I heard coachman say that the squire's taken to him hugely; and they do think at the hall that the young gentleman will be his heir."

"Aha!—indeed—his heir! What is the lad's name? What relation can he be to Mr. Darrell?"

"I don't know what relation exactly, sir; but he is one of the Haughtons, and they've been kin to the Fawley folks time out of mind."

"Haughton?—aha! Thank you, ma'am. Change, if you please."

The stranger tossed off his dram, and stretched his hand for his change.

"Beg pardon, sir, but this must be forring money," said the landlady, turning a five-franc piece on her palm with suspicious curiosity.

"Foreign! Is it possible?" The stranger dived again into his pocket, and apparently with some difficulty hunted out half-a-crown.

"Sixpence more, if you please, sir; three brandies, and bread-and-cheese, and the ale too, sir."

"How stupid I am! I thought that French coin was a five-shilling piece. I fear I have no English money about me but this half-crown; and I can't ask you to trust me, as you don't know me."

"Oh, sir, 'tis all one if you know the squire. You may be passing this way again."

"I shall not forget my debt when I do, you may be sure," said the stranger; and, with a nod, he walked away in the same direction as Darrell and Lionel had already taken—through a turnstile by a public path that, skirting the churchyard and the neighboring parsonage, led along a cornfield to the demesnes of Fawley.

The path was narrow, the corn rising on either side, so that two persons could not well walk abreast. Lionel was some paces in advance, Darrell walking slow. The stranger followed at a distance; once or twice he quickened his pace, as if resolved to overtake Darrell; then, apparently, his mind misgave him, and he again fell back.

There was somethng furtive and sinister about the man. Little could be seen of his face, for he wore a large hat of foreign make, slouched deep over his brow, and his lips and jaw were concealed by a dark and full mustache and beard. As much of the general outline of the countenance as remained distinguishable was, nevertheless, decidedly handsome; but a complexion naturally rich in color, seemed to have gained the heated look which comes with the earlier habits of intemperance, before it fades into the leaden hues of the later.

His dress bespoke pretension to a certain rank; but its component parts were strangely ill-assorted, out of date, and out of repair: pearl-colored trousers, with silk braids down their sides; brodequins to match—Parisian fashion three years back, but the trousers shabby, the braiding discolored, the brodequins in holes. The coat—once a black evening-dress coat—of a cut a year or two anterior to that of the trousers; satin facings—cloth napless, satin stained. Over all, a sort of summer travelling-cloak, or rather large cape of a waterproof silk, once the extreme mode with the Lions of the *Chaussée d' Antin* whenever they ventured to rove to Swiss cantons or German spas; but which, from a certain dainty effeminacy in its shape and texture, required the minutest elegance in the general costume of its wearer as well as the cleanliest purity in itself. Worn by this traveller, and well-nigh worn out too, the cape became a finery, mournful as a tattered pennon over a wreck.

Yet in spite of this dress, however unbecoming, shabby, obsolete, a second glance could scarcely fail to note the wearer as a man wonderfully well-shaped—tall, slender in the waist, long of limb, but with a girth of chest

that showed immense power—one of those rare figures that a female eye would admire for grace—a recruiting sergeant for athletic strength.

But still the man's whole bearing and aspect, even apart from the dismal incongruities of his attire, which gave him the air of a beggared spendthrift, marred the favorable effect that physical comeliness in itself produces. Difficult to describe how—difficult to say why—but there is a look which a man gets, and a gait which he contracts when the rest of mankind cut him; and this man had that look and that gait.

"So, so," muttered the stranger. "That boy his heir?—so, so. How can I get to speak to him? In his own house he would not see me: it must be as now, in the open air; but how catch him alone? and to lurk in the inn, in his own village—perhaps for a day—to watch an occasion; impossible! Besides, where is the money for it? Courage, courage!" He quickened his pace, pushed back his hat. "Courage! Why not now? Now or never!"

While the man thus mutteringly solilquized, Lionel had reached the gate which opened into the grounds of Fawley, just in the rear of the little lake. Over the gate he swung himself lightly, and, turning back to Darrell, cried, "Here is the doe waiting to welcome you."

Just as Darrell, scarcely heeding the exclamation, and with his musing eyes on the ground, approached the gate, a respectful hand opened it wide, a submissive head bowed low, a voice artificially soft faltered forth words, broken and indistinct, but of which those most audible were—"Pardon me—something to communicate—important—hear me."

Darrell started—just as the traveller almost touched him—started—recoiled, as one on whose path rises a wild beast. His bended head became erect, haughty, indignant, defying; but his cheek was pale, and his lip quivered. "You here! You in England—at Fawley! You presume to accost me! You, sir, you—"

Lionel just caught the sound of the voice as the doe had come timidly up to him. He turned round sharply, and beheld Darrell's stern, imperious countenance, on which, stern and imperious though it was, a hasty glance could discover, at once, a surprise, that almost bordered upon fear. Of the stranger still holding the gate he saw but the back, and his voice he did not hear, though by the man's gesture he was evidently replying. Lionel paused a moment irresolute; but as the man continued to speak, he saw Darrell's face grow paler and paler, and in the impulse of a vague alarm he hastened towards him; but just within three feet of the spot, Darrell arrested his steps.

"Go home, Lionel; this person would speak to me in private." Then, in a lower tone, he said to the stranger, "Close the gate, sir; you are standing upon the land of my fathers. If you would speak with me, this way;" and, brushing through the corn, Darrell strode towards a patch of waste land that adjoined the field: the man followed him, and both passed from Lionel's eyes. The doe had come to the gate to greet her master; she now rested her nostrils on the bar, with a look disappointed and plaintive.

"Come," said Lionel, "come." The doe would not stir.

So the boy walked on alone, not much occupied with what had just passed. "Doubtless," thought he, "some person in the neighborhood upon country business."

He skirted the lake, and seated himself on a garden bench near the house. What did he there think of?—who knows? Perhaps of the Great World; perhaps of little Sophy! Time fled on: the sun was receding in the west, when Darrell hurried past him without speaking, and entered the house.

The host did not appear at dinner, nor all that evening. Mr. Mills made an excuse—Mr. Darrell did not feel very well.

Fairthorn had Lionel all to himself, and having within the last few days reindulged in open cordiality to the young guest, he was especially communicative that evening. He talked much on Darrell, and with all the affection that, in spite of his fear, the poor flute-player felt for his ungracious patron. He told many anecdotes of the stern man's tender kindness to all that came within its sphere. He told also anecdotes more striking of the kind man's sternness where some obstinate prejudice, some ruling passion, made him "granite."

"Lord, my dear young sir," said Fairthorn, "be his most bitter open enemy, and fall down

in the mire, the first hand to help you would be Guy Darrell's; but be his professed friend, and betray him to the worth of a straw, and never try to see his face again if you are wise —the most forgiving and the least forgiving of human beings. But—"

The study door noiselessly opened, and Darrell's voice called out,

"Fairthorn, let me speak with you."

CHAPTER XV.

Every street has two sides, the shady side and the sunny. When two men shake hands and part, mark which of the two takes the sunny side; he will be the younger man of the two.

THE next morning, neither Darrell nor Fairthorn appeared at breakfast; but as soon as Lionel had concluded that meal, Mr. Mills informed him, with customary politeness, that Mr. Darrell wished to speak with him in the study. Study, across the threshold of which Lionel had never yet set footstep! He entered it now with a sentiment of mingled curiosity and awe. Nothing in it remarkable, save the portrait of the host's father over the mantelpiece. Books strewed tables, chairs, and floors in the disorder loved by habitual students. Near the window was a glass bowl containing gold-fish, and close by, in its cage, a singing-bird. Darrell might exist without companionship in the human species, but not without something which he protected and cherished—a bird—even a fish.

Darrell looked really ill; his keen eye was almost dim, and the lines in his face seemed deeper. But he spoke with his usual calm, passionless melody of voice.

"Yes," he said, in answer to Lionel's really anxious inquiry; "I am ill. Idle persons like me give way to illness. When I was a busy man, I never did; and then illness gave way to me. My general plans are thus, if not actually altered, at least hurried to their consummation sooner than I expected. Before you came here, I told you to come soon, or you might not find me. I meant to go abroad this summer; I shall now start at once. I need the change of scene and air. You will return to London to-day."

"To-day! You are not angry with me?"

"Angry! boy, and cousin—no!" resumed Darrell, in a tone of unusual tenderness. "Angry—fie! But since the parting must be, 'tis well to abridge the pain of long farewells. You must wish, too, to see your mother, and thank her for rearing you up so that you may step from poverty into ease with a head erect. You will give to Mrs. Haughton this letter: for yourself, your inclinations seem to tend towards the army. But before you decide on that career, I should like you to see something more of the world. Call to-morrow on Colonel Morley, in Curzon Street: this is his address. He will receive by to-day's post a note from me, requesting him to advise you. Follow his counsels in what belongs to the world. He is a man *of* the world—a distant connection of mine—who will be kind to you for my sake. Is there more to say? Yes. It seems an ungracious speech; but I should speak it. Consider yourself sure from me of an independent income. Never let idle sycophants lead you into extravagance, by telling you that you will have more. But indulge not the expectation, however plausible, that you will be my heir."

"Mr. Darrel—oh, sir—"

"Hush—the expectation would be reasonable; but I am a strange being. I might marry again—have heirs of my own. Eh, sir—why not?" Darrell spoke these last words almost fiercely, and fixed his eyes on Lionel as he repeated—"Why not?" But seeing that the boy's face evinced no surprise, the expression of his own relaxed, and he continued calmly—"Enough; what I have thus rudely said was kindly meant. It is a treason to a young man to let him count on a fortune which at last is left away from him. Now, Lionel, go; enjoy your spring of life! Go, hopeful and light-hearted. If sorrow reach you, battle with it; if error mislead you, come fearlessly to me for counsel. Why boy—what is this—tears? Tut, tut."

"It is your goodness," faltered Lionel. "I cannot help it. And is there nothing I can do for you in return?"

"Yes, much. Keep your name free from stain, and your heart open to such noble emotions as awaken tears like those. Ah, by the by, I heard from my lawyer to-day about your poor little *protégée*. Not found yet, but he

seems sanguine of quick success. You shall know the moment I hear more."

"You will write to me then, sir, and I may write to you?"

"As often as you please. Always direct to me here."

"Shall you be long abroad?"

Darrell's brows met. "I don't know," said he, curtly. "Adieu."

He opened the door as he spoke.

Lionel looked at him with wistful yearning, filial affection, through his swimming eyes. "God bless you, sir," he murmured, simply, and passed away.

"That blessing should have come from me!" said Darrell to himself, as he turned back, and stood on his solitary hearth. "But they on whose heads I once poured a blessing, where are they—where? And that man's tale, reviving the audacious fable which the other, and I verily believe the less guilty knave of the two, sought to palm on me years ago! Stop; let me weigh well what he said. If it were true! Oh, shame, shame!"

Folding his arms tightly on his breast, Darrell paced the room with slow, measured strides. pondering deeply. He was, indeed, seeking to suppress feeling, and to exercise only judgment; and his reasoning process seemed at length fully to satisfy him, for his countenance gradually cleared, and a triumphant smile passed across it. "A lie—certainly a palpable and gross lie; lie it must and shall be. Never will I accept it as truth. Father" (looking full at the portrait over the mantel-shelf), "father, fear not—never—never!"

BOOK THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

Certes, the Lizard is a shy and timorous creature. He runs into chinks and crannies if you come too near to him, and sheds his very tail for fear, if you catch it by the tip. He has not his being in good society —no one cages him, no one pets. He is an idle vagrant. But when he steals through the green herbage, and basks unmolested in the sun, he crowds perhaps as much enjoyment into one summer hour as a parrot, however pampered and erudite, spreads over a whole drawing-room life spent in saying, "How d'ye do?" and "Pretty Poll."

On that dull and sombre summer morning in which the grandfather and grandchild departed from the friendly roof of Mr. Merle, very dull and very sombre were the thoughts of little Sophy. She walked slowly behind the gray cripple who had need to lean so heavily on his staff, and her eye had not even a smile for the golden buttercups that glittered on dewy meads alongside the barren road.

Thus had they proceeded apart and silent till they had passed the second milestone. There, Waife, rousing from his own reveries, which were perhaps yet more dreary than those of the dejected child, halted abruptly, passed his hand once or twice rapidly over his forehead, and turning round to Sophy, looked into her face with great kindness as she came slowly to his side.

"You are sad, little one?" said he.

"Very sad, Grandy."

"And displeased with me? Yes, displeased that I have taken you suddenly away from the pretty young gentleman who was so kind to you, without encouraging the chance that you were to meet with him again."

"It was not like you, Grandy," answered Sophy; and her under-lip slightly pouted, while the big tear swelled to her eye.

"True," said the vagabond; "anything resembling common sense is not like me. But don't you think that I did what I felt was best for you? Must I not have some good cause for it, whenever I have the heart deliberately to vex you?"

Sophy took his hand and pressed it, but she could not trust herself to speak, for she felt that at such effort she would have burst out into hearty crying. Then Waife proceeded to utter many of those wise sayings, old as the hills, and as high above our sorrows as hills are from the valley in which we walk. He said how foolish it was to unsettle the mind by preposterous fancies and impossible hopes. The pretty young gentleman could never be anything to her, nor she to the pretty young gentleman. It might be very well for the pretty young gentleman to promise to correspond with her, but as soon as he returned to his friends he would have other things to think of, and she would soon be forgotten: while she, on the contrary, would be thinking of him, and the Thames and the butterflies, and find hard life still more irksome. Of all this, and much more, in the general way of consolers who set out on the principle that grief is a matter of logic, did Gentleman Waife deliver himself with a vigor of ratiocination which admitted of no reply, and conveyed not a particle of comfort. And feeling this, that great Actor—not that he was acting then—suddenly stopped, clasped the child in his arms, and murmured in broken accents—"But if I see you thus cast down, I shall have no strength left to hobble on through the world; and the sooner I lie down, and the dust is shovelled over me, why, the better for you; for it seems that Heaven sends you friends, and I tear you from them."

And then Sophy fairly gave way to her sobs: she twined her little arms round the old man's neck convulsively, kissed his rough face with imploring pathetic fondness, and forced out through her tears, "Don't talk so! I've been

ungrateful and wicked. I don't care for any one but my own dear, dear Grandy."

After this little scene, they both composed themselves, and felt much lighter of heart. They pursued their journey, no longer apart, but side by side, and the old man leaning, though very lightly, on the child's arm. But there was no immediate reaction from gloom to gaiety. Waife began talking in softened undertones, and vaguely, of his own past afflictions; and partial as was the reference, how vast did the old man's sorrows seem beside the child's regrets; and yet he commented on them as if rather in pitying her state than grieving for his own.

"Ah, at your age, my darling, I had not your troubles and hardships. I had not to trudge these dusty roads on foot with a broken-down good-for-nothing scatterling. I trod rich carpets, and slept under silken curtains. I took the air in gay carriages—I such a scapegrace—and you little child—you so good! All gone, all melted away from me, and not able now to be sure that you will have a crust of bread this day week."

"Oh, yes! I shall have bread, and you too, Grandy," cried Sophy, with cheerful voice. "It was you who taught me to pray to God, and said that in all your troubles God had been good to you; and He has been so good to me since I prayed to Him; for I have no dreadful Mrs. Crane to beat me now, and say things more hard to bear than beating—and you have taken me to yourself. How I prayed for that. And I take care of you too, Grandy,—don't I? I prayed for *that* too; and as to carriages," added Sophy, with superb air, "I don't care if I am never in a carriage as long as I live; and you know I *have* been in a van, which is bigger than a carriage, and I didn't like that at all. But how came people to behave so ill to you, Grandy?"

"I never said people behaved ill to me, Sophy."

"Did not they take away the carpets and silk curtains, and all the fine things you had as a little boy?"

"I don't know," replied Waife, with a puzzled look, "that people actually took them away—but they melted away. However, I had much still to be thankful for—I was so strong, and had such high spirits, Sophy, and found people not behaving ill to me—quite the contrary—so kind. I found no Crane (she monster) as you did, my little angel. Such prospects before me, if I had walked straight towards them. But I followed my own fancy, which led me zigzag; and now that I would stray back into the high-road, you see before you a man whom a Justice of the Peace could send to the treadmill for presuming to live without a livelihood."

SOPHY.—"Not without a livelihood!—the what did you call it?—independent income—that is, the Three Pounds, Grandy?"

WAIFE (admiringly).—"Sensible child. That is true. Yes, Heaven *is* very good to me still. Ah! what signifies fortune? How happy I was with my dear Lizzy, and yet no two persons could live more from hand to mouth."

SOPHY (rather jealously).—"Lizzy?"

WAIFE (with moistened eyes, and looking down).—"My wife. She was only spared to me two years—such sunny years! And how grateful I ought to be that she did not live longer. She was saved—such—such—such shame and misery!" A long pause.

Waife resumed, with a rush from memory, as if plucking himself from the claws of a harpy—"What's the good of looking back? A man's gone self is a dead thing. It is not I—now tramping this road with you to lean upon—whom I see, when I would turn to look behind on that which I once was—it is another being, defunct and buried; and when I say to myself, 'that being did so and so, it is like reading an epitaph on a tombstone. So, at last, solitary and hopeless, I came back to my own land; and I found you—a blessing greater than I had ever dared to count on. And how was I to maintain you, and take you from that long-nosed alligator called Crane, and put you in womanly gentle hands? for I never thought then of subjecting you to all you have since undergone with me. I who did not know one useful thing in life by which a man can turn a penny. And then, as I was all alone in a village alehouse, on my way back from—it does not signify from what, or from whence, but I was disappointed and despairing—Providence mercifully threw in my way—Mr. Rugge—and ordained me to be of great service to that ruffian—and that ruffian of great use to me."

SOPHY.—"Ah, how was that?"

WAIFE.—"It was fair-time in the village

wherein I stopped, and Rugge's principal actor was taken off by *delirium tremens*, which is Latin for a disease common to men who eat little and drink much. Rugge came into the alehouse bemoaning his loss. A bright thought struck me. Once in my day I had been used to acting. I offered to try my chance on Mr. Rugge's stage; he caught at me—I at him. I succeeded; we came to terms, and my little Sophy was thus taken from that ringleted crocodile, and placed with Christian females who wore caps and read their Bible. Is not Heaven good to us Sophy—and to me too—me, such a scamp!"

"And you did all that—suffered all that for my sake?"

"Suffered—but I liked it. And, besides, I must have done something; and there were reasons—in short, I was quite happy—no, not actually happy, but comfortable and merry. Providence gives thick hides to animals that must exist in cold climates; and to the man whom it reserves for sorrow, Providence gives a coarse, jovial temper. Then, when by a mercy I was saved from what I most disliked and dreaded, and never would have thought of but that I fancied it might be a help to you—I mean the London stage—and had that bad accident on the railway, how did it end? Oh! in saving you" (and Waife closed his eyes and shuddered)—"in saving your destiny from what might be much worse for you, body and soul, than the worst that has happened to you with me. And so we have been thrown together; and so you have supported me; and so, when we could exist without Mr. Rugge, Providence got rid of him for us. And so we are now walking along the high-road; and through yonder trees you can catch a peep of the roof under which we are about to rest for a while; and there you will learn what I have done with the Three Pounds!"

"It is not the Spotted Boy, Grandy?"

"No," said Waife, sighing; "the Spotted Boy is a handsome income; but let us only trust in Providence, and I should not wonder if our new acquisition proved a monstrous—"

"Monstrous!"

"Piece of good fortune."

CHAPTER II.

The Investment revealed.

GENTLEMAN WAIFE passed through a turnstile, down a narrow lane, and reached a solitary cottage. He knocked at the door; an old peasant-woman opened it, and dropped him a civil curtsy. "Indeed, sir, I am glad you are come. I'se most afeared he be dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed Waife. "Oh, Sophy, if he should be dead."

"Who?"

Waife did not heed the question. "What makes you think him dead?" said he, fumbling in his pockets, from which he at last produced a key. "You have not been disobeying my strick orders, and tampering with the door?"

"Lor' love ye, no, sir. But he made such a noise a fust—awful! And now he's as still as a corpse. And I did peep through the keyhole, and he was stretched stark."

"Hunger, perhaps," said the Comedian; "'tis his way when he has been kept fasting much over his usual hours. Follow me, Sophy." He put aside the woman, entered the sanded kitchen, ascended a stair that led from it; and Sophy following, stopped at a door and listened: not a sound. Timidly he unlocked the portals and crept in, when, suddenly, such a rush—such a spring, and a mass of something vehement yet soft, dingy yet whitish, whirled past the actor, and came pounce against Sophy, who therewith uttered a shriek.

"Stop him, stop him, for heaven's sake," cried Waife. "Shut the door below—seize him." Down-stairs, however, went the mass, and down-stairs after it hobbled Waife, returning in a few moments with the recaptured and mysterious fugitive. "There," he cried triumphantly to Sophy, who, standing against the wall with her face buried in her frock, long refused to look up—"there—tame as a lamb, and knows me. See"—he seated himself on the floor, and Sophy, hesitatingly opening her eyes, beheld gravely gazing at her from under a profusion of shaggy locks an enormous—

CHAPTER III.

Denouement!

Poodle!

CHAPTER IV.

Zoology in connection with History.

"WALK to that young lady sir—walk, I say." The poodle slowly rose on his hind-legs, and, with an aspect inexpressibly solemn, advanced towards Sophy, who hastily receded into the room in which the creature had been confined.

"Make a bow—*no*—a *bow*, sir; that is right: you can shake hands another time. Run down, Sophy, and ask for his dinner."

"Yes—that I will;" and Sophy flew down the stairs.

The dog, still on his hind-legs, stood in the centre of the floor, dignified, but evidently expectant.

"That will do; lie down and die. Die this moment, sir." The dog stretched himself out, closed his eyes, and to all appearance gave up the ghost. "A most splendid investment," said Waife, with enthusiasm; "and, upon the whole, dog cheap. Ho! *you* are not to bring up his dinner; it is not you who are to make friends with the dog; it is my little girl; send her up; Sophy, Sophy."

"She be fritted, sir," said the woman, holding a plate of canine comestibles; "but lauk, sir; ben't he really dead?"

"Sophy, Sophy."

"Please let me stay, here, Grandy," said Sophy's voice from the foot of the stairs.

"Nonsense! it is sixteen hours since he has had a morsel to eat. And he will never bite the hand that feeds him now. Come up, I say."

Sophy slowly reascended, and Waife, summoning the poodle to life, insisted upon the child's feeding him. And indeed, when that act of charity was performed, the dog evinced his gratitude by a series of unsophisticated bounds and waggings of the tail, which gradually removed Sophy's apprehensions, and laid the foundations for that intimate friendship which is the natural relation between child and dog.

"And how did you come by him?" asked Sophy; "and is this really the—the INVESTMENT?"

"Shut the door carefully, but see first that the women is not listening. Lie down, sir, there, at the feet of the young lady. Good dog. How did I come by him? I will tell you. The first day we arrived at the village which we have just left, I went into the tobacconist's. While I was buying my ounce of canaster, that dog entered the shop. In his mouth was a sixpence wrapped in paper. He lifted himself on his hind-legs, and laid his missive on the counter. The shopwoman—you know her, Mrs. Traill—unfolded the paper and read the order. 'Clever dog that, sir,' said she. 'To fetch and carry?' said I, indifferently. 'More than that, sir; you shall see. The order is for two penn'orth of snuff. The dog knows he is to take back fourpence. I will give him a penny short.' So she took the sixpence and gave the dog threepence out of it. The dog shook his head and looked gravely into her face. 'That's all you'll get,' said she. The dog shook his head again, and tapped his paw once on the counter, as much as to say, 'I'm not to be done—a penny more if you please.' 'If you'll not take that, you shall have nothing,' said Mrs. Traill, and she took back the threepence."

"Dear! and what did the dog do then—snarl or bite?"

"Not so; he knew he was in his rights, and did not lower himself by showing bad temper. The dog looked quietly round, saw a basket which contained two or three pounds of candles lying in a corner for the shopboy to take to some customer; took up the basket in his mouth, and turned tail, as much as to say, 'Tit for tat then.' He understood, you see, what is called 'the law of reprisals.' 'Come back this moment,' cried Mrs. Traill. The dog walked out of the shop; then she ran after him, and counted the four-pence before him, on which he dropped the basket, picked up the right change, and went off demurely. 'To whom does that poodle belong?' said I. 'To a poor drunken man,' said Mrs. Trail; 'I wish it was in better hands.' 'So do I, ma'am,' answered I;—'did he teach it?' 'No, it was taught by his brother, who was an old soldier, and died in his house two weeks ago. It knows a great many tricks, and is quite young. It might make a fortune as a show, sir.' So I was thinking. I inquired the owner's address, called on him, and found him disposed to sell the dog. But he asked £3, a sum that seemed out of the question then. Still I kept the dog in my eye; called every day to make friends with it, and ascertain its capacities. And at

last, thanks to you, Sophy, I bought the dog; and what is more, as soon as I had two golden sovereigns to show, I got him for that sum, and we have still £1 left (besides small savings from our lost salaries) to go to the completion of his education, and the advertisement of his merits. I kept this a secret from Merle —from all. I would not even let the drunken owner know where I took the dog to yesterday. I brought him here, where, I learned in the village, there were two rooms to let—locked him up—and my story is told."

"But why keep it such a secret?"

"Because I don't want Rugge to trace us. He might do one a mischief; because I have a grand project of genteel position and high prices for the exhibition of that dog. And why should it be known where we come from, or what we were? And because, if the owner knew where to find the dog, he might decoy it back from us. Luckily he had not made the dog so fond of him, but what, unless it be decoyed, it will accustom itself to us. And now I propose that we should stay a week or so here, and devote ourselves exclusively to developing the native powers of this gifted creature. Get out the dominoes."

"What is his name?"

"Ha! that is the first consideration. What shall be his name?"

"Has he not one already?"

"Yes—trivial and unattractive—Mop! In private life it might pass. But in public life—give a dog a bad name and hang him. Mop, indeed!"

Therewith Mop, considering himself appealed to, rose and stretched himself.

"Right," said Gentleman Waife; "stretch yourself; you decidedly require it."

CHAPTER V.

Mop becomes a personage. Much thought is bestowed on the verbal dignities, without which a Personage would become a Mop. The importance of names is apparent in all history. If Augustus had called himself king, Rome would have risen against him as a Tarquin; so he remained a simple equestrian, and modestly called himself Imperator. Mop chooses his own title in a most mysterious manner, and ceases to be Mop.

"THE first noticeable defect in your name of Mop," said Gentleman Waife, "is, as you yourself denote, the want of elongation. Monosyllables are not imposing, and in striking compositions their meaning is elevated by periphrasis; that is to say, Sophy, that what before was a short truth, an elegant author elaborates into a long stretch."

"Certainly," said Sophy, thoughtfully; "I don't think the name of Mop would draw! Still he is very like a Mop."

"For that reason the name degrades him the more, and lowers him from an intellectual phenomenon to a physical attribute, which is vulgar. I hope that that dog will enable us to rise in the Scale of Being. For whereas we in acting could only command a three-penny audience—reserved seats a shilling—he may aspire to half-crowns and dress-boxes; that is, if we can hit on a name which inspires respect. Now, although the dog is big, it is not by his size that he is to become famous, or we might call him Hercules or Goliah; neither is it by his beauty, or Adonis would not be unsuitable. It is by his superior sagacity and wisdom. And there I am puzzled to find his prototype amongst mortals; for, perhaps, it may be my ignorance of history—"

"You ignorant, indeed, grandfather!"

"But considering the innumerable millions who have lived on the earth, it is astonishing how few I can call to mind who have left behind them a proverbial renown for wisdom. There is, indeed, Solomon, but he fell off at the last; and as he belongs to sacred history, we must not take a liberty with his name. Who is there very, very, very wise, besides Solomon? Think, Sophy—Profane History."

SOPHY (after a musing pause).—"Puss in Boots."

"Well, he *was* wise; but then he was not human; he was a cat. "Ha! Socrates. Shall we call him Socrates, Socrates, Socrates?"

SOPHY.—"Socrates, Socrates."

Mop yawned.

WAIFE.—"He don't take to Socrates—prosy!"

SOPHY.—"Ah Mr. Merle's book about the Brazen Head, *Friar Bacon! He* must have been very wise."

WAIFE.—"Not bad; mysterious, but not recondite; historical, yet familiar. What does Mop say to it? Friar, Friar, Friar Bacon, sir, —Friar."

SOPHY (coaxingly).—"Friar."

Mop, evidently conceiving that appeal is made to some other personage, canine or human, not present, rouses up, walks to the door, smells at the chink, returns, shakes his head, and rests on his haunches, eyeing his two friends superciliously.

SOPHY.—"He does not take to that name."

WAIFE.—"He has his reasons for it; and indeed there are many worthy persons who disapprove of anything that savors of magical practices. Mop intimates that, on entering public life, one should beware of offending the respectable prejudices of a class."

Mr. Waife then, once more resorting to the recesses of scholastic memory, plucked therefrom, somewhat by the head and shoulders, sundry names reverenced in a by-gone age. He thought of the seven wise men of Greece, but could only recall the nomenclature of two out of the seven—a sad proof of the distinction between collegiate fame and popular renown. He called Thales; he called Bion. Mop made no response. "Wonderful intelligence!" said Waife; "he knows that Thales and Bion would not draw!—obsolete."

Mop was equally mute to Aristotle. He pricked up his ears at Plato, perhaps because the sound was not wholly dissimilar from that of Ponto—a name of which he might have had vague reminiscences. The Romans, not having cultivated an original philosophy, though they contrived to produce great men without it, Waife passed by that perished people. He crossed to China, and tried Confucius. Mop had evidenly never heard of him.

"I am at the end of my list, so far as the wise men are concerned," said Waife, wiping his forehead. "If Mop were to distinguish himself by valor, one would find heroes by the dozen—Achilles, and Hector, and Julius Cæsar, and Pompey, and Bonaparte, and Alexander the Great, and the Duke of Marlborough. Or, if he wrote poetry, we could fit him to a hair. But wise men certainly are scarce, snd when one has hit on a wise man's name, it is so little known to the vulgar that it would carry no more weight with it than Spot or Toby. But necessarily some name the dog must have, and take to, sympathetically."

Sophy meanwhile had extracted the dominoes from Waife's bundle, and with the dominoes an alphabet and a multiplication-table in printed capitals. As the Comedian's one eye rested upon the last, he exclaimed, "But after all, Mop's great strength will probably be in arithmetic, and the science of numbers is the root of all wisdom. Besides, every man, high and low, wants to make a fortune, and associations connected with addition and multiplication are always pleasing. Who, then, is the sage at computation most universally known? Unquestionably *Cocker!* He must take to that—Cocker, Cocker" (commandingly)—"C-o-c-k-e-r" (with persuasive sweetness).

Mop looked puzzled; he put his head first on one side, then the other.

SOPHY (with mellifluous endearment).—"Cocker, good Cocker; Cocker dear."

BOTH.—"Cocker, Cocker, Cocker!"

Excited and bewildered, Mop put up his head, and gave vent to his perplexities in a long and lugubrious howl, to which certainly none who heard it could have desired addition or multiplication.

"Stop this instant, sir—stop; I shoot you! You are dead—down!" Waife adjusted his staff to his shoulder gun-wise; and at the word of command, Down, Mop was on his side, stiff and lifeless. "Still," said Waife, "a name connected with profound calculation would be the most appropriate; for instance, Sir Isaac—"

Before the Comedian could get out the word Newton, Mop had sprung to his four feet, and, with wagging tail and wriggling back evinced a sense of beatified recognition.

"Astounding!" said Waife, rather awed. "Can it be the name?—Impossible. Sir Isaac, Sir Isaac!"

"Bow wow!" answered Mop, joyously.

"If there be any truth in the doctrine of metempsychosis," faltered Gentleman Waife, "if the great Newton could have transmigrated into that incomparable animal! Newton, Newton!" To that name Mob made no obeisance, but, evidently still restless, walked round the room, smelling at every corner, and turning to look back with inquisitive earnestness at his new master.

"He does not seem to catch at the name of Newton," said Waife, trying it thrice again, and vainly, "and yet he seems extremely well versed in the principle of gravity. Sir Isaac!" The dog bounded towards him, put his paws on his shoulder, and licked his face. "Just cut out those figures carefully, my dear, and

see if we can get him to tell us how much twice ten are—I mean by addressing him as Sir Isaac."

Sophy cut the figures from the multiplication table, and arranged them, at Waife's instruction, in a circle on the floor. "Now, Sir Isaac." Mop lifted a paw, and walked deliberately round the letters. "Now, Sir Isaac, how much are ten times two?" Mop deliberately made his survey and calculation, and, pausing at twenty, stooped, and took the letters in his mouth.

"It is not natural," cried Sophy much alarmed. "it must be wicked,and I'd rather have nothing to do with it, please."

"Silly child. He was but obeying my sign. He had been thought that trick already under the name of Mop. The only strange thing is, that he should do it also under the name of Sir Isaac, and much more cheerfully too. However, whether he has been the great Newton or not, a live dog is better than a dead lion. But it is clear that, in acknowledging the name of Sir Isaac, he does not encourage us to take that of Newton—and he is right; for it might be thought unbecoming to apply to an animal, however extraordinary, who by the severity of fortune is compelled to exhibit his talents for a small pecuniary reward, the family name of so great a Philosopher. Sir Isaac, after all, is a vague appellation—any dog has a right to be Sir Isaac—Newton may be left conjectural. Let us see if we can add to our arithmetical information. Look at me, Sir Isaac." Sir Isaac looked and grinned affectionately; and under that title learned a new combination with a facility that might have relieved Sophy's mind of all superstitious belief that the philosopher was resuscitated in the dog, had she known that in life that great master of calculations the most abstruse could not accurately cast up a simple sum in addition. Nothing brought him to the end of his majestic tether like dot and carry one.

Notable type of our human incompleteness, where men might deem our studies had made us most complete! Notable type, too, of that grandest order of all human genius which seems to arrive at results by intuition;—which a child might pose by a row of figures on a slate—while it is solving the laws that link the stars to infinity! But *revenons à nos moutons*, what was the astral attraction that incontestably bound the reminiscences of Mop to the cognominal distinction of Sir Isaac? I had prepared a very erudite and subtle treatise upon this query, enlivened by quotations from the ancient Mystics—such as Iamblicus and Proclus—as well as by a copious reference to the doctrine of the more modern Spiritualists, from Sir Kenelm Digby and Swedenbourg, to Monsieur Cahagnet and Judge Edwards: it was to be called Inquiry into the Law of Affinities, by Philomopsos: when, unluckily for my treatise, I arrived at the knowledge of a fact which, though it did not render the treatise less curious, knocked on the head the theory upon which it was based. The baptismal name of the old soldier, Mop's first proprietor and earliest preceptor, was Isaac; and his master being called in the homely household by that Christian name, the sound had entered into Mop's youngest and most endeared associations. His canine affections had done much towards ripening his scholastic education. "Where is Isaac?" "Call Isaac!" "Fetch Isaac his hat," etc., etc. Stilled was that name when the old soldier died; but when heard again, Mop's heart was moved, and in missing the old master, he felt more at home with the new.

As for the title, "Sir," it was a mere expletive in his ears. Such was the fact, and such the deduction to be drawn from it. Not that it will satisfy every one. I know that philosophers who deny all that they have not witnessed, and refuse to witness what they resolve to deny, will reject the story *in toto;* and will prove, by reference to their own dogs, that a dog never recognizes the name of his master —never yet could be taught arithmetic. I know also that there are Mystics who will prefer to believe that Mop was in direct spiritual communication with unseen Isaacs, or in a state of clairvoyance, or under the influence of the odic fluid. But did we ever yet find in human reason a question with only one side to it? Is not truth a polygon? Have not sages arisen in our day to deny even the principle of gravity, for which we had been so long contentedly taking the word of the great Sir Isaac? It is that blessed spirit of controversy which keeps the world going; and it is that which, perhaps, explains why Mr. Waife, when his memory was fairly put to it, could remember, out of the history of the myriads who

have occupied our planet from the date of Adam to that in which I now write, so very few men whom the world will agree to call wise, and out of that very few so scant a percentage with names sufficiently known to make them more popularly significant of pre-eminent sagacity than if they had been called—Mops.

CHAPTER VI.

The Vagrant having got his dog, proceeds to hunt Fortune with it, leaving behind him a trap to catch rats. What the trap does catch is "just like his luck."

SIR ISAAC, to designate him by his new name, improved much upon acquaintance. He was still in the ductile season of youth, and took to learning as an amusement to himself. His last master, a stupid sot, had not gained his affections—and perhaps even the old soldier, though gratefully remembered and mourned, had not stolen into his innermost heart, as Waife and Sophy gently contrived to do. In short, in a very few days he became perfectly accustomed and extremely attached to them. When Waife had ascertained the extent of his accomplishments, and added somewhat to their range in matters which cost no great trouble, he applied himself to the task of composing a little drama, which might bring them all into more interesting play, and in which, though Sophy and himself were performers, the dog had the *premier rôle*. And as soon as this was done, and the dog's performances thus ranged into methodical order and sequence, he resolved to set off to a considerable town at some distance, and to which Mr. Rugge was no visitor.

His bill at the cottage made but slight inroad into his pecuniary resources; for in the intervals of leisure from his instructions to Sir Isaac Waife had performed various little services to the lone widow with whom they lodged, which Mrs. Saunders (such was her name) insisted upon regarding as money's worth. He had repaired and regulated to a minute an old clock which had taken no note of time for the last three years; he had mended all the broken crockery by some cement of his own invention, and for which she got him the materials. And here his ingenuity was remarkable, for when there was only a fragment to be found of a cup, and a fragment or two of a saucer, he united them both into some pretty form, which, if not useful, at all events looked well on a shelf. He bound, in smart showy papers, sundry tattered old books which had belonged to his landlady's defunct husband, a Scotch gardener, and which she displayed on a side-table, under the japan tea-tray. More than all, he was of service to her in her vocation; for Mrs. Saunders eked out a small pension—which she derived from the affectionate providence of her Scotch husband, in insuring his life in her favor—by the rearing and sale of poultry; and Waife saved her the expense of a carpenter by the construction of a new coop, elevated above the reach of the rats, who had hitherto made sad ravage amongst the chickens; while he confided to her certain secrets in the improvement of breed and the cheaper processes of fattening, which excited her gratitude no less than her wonder. "The fact is," said Gentleman Waife, "that my life has known makeshifts. Once, in a foreign country, I kept poultry upon the principle that the poultry should keep me."

Strange it was to notice such versatility of invention, such readiness of resource, such familiarity with divers nooks and crannies in the practical experience of life, in a man now so hard put to it for a livelihood. There are persons, however, who might have a good stock of talent, if they did not turn it all into small change. And you, reader, know as well as I do, that when a sovereign or a shilling is once broken into, the change scatters and dispends itself in a way quite unaccountable. Still coppers are useful in household bills; and when Waife was really at a pinch, somehow or other, by hook or by crook, he scraped together intellectual half-pence enough to pay his way.

Mrs. Saunders grew quite fond of her lodgers. Waife she regarded as a prodigy of genius; Sophy was the prettiest and best of children; Sir Isaac, she took for granted, was worthy of his owners. But the Comedian did not confide to her his dog's learning, nor the use to which he designed to put it. And in still greater precaution, when he took his leave, he extracted from Mrs. Saunders a solemn promise that she would set no one on his track, in case of impertinent inquiries.

"You see before you," said he, "a man who has enemies—such as rats are to your chickens: chickens despise rats when raised, as yours are now, above the reach of claws and teeth. Some day or other I may so raise a coop for that little one—I am too old for coops. Meanwhile, if a rat comes sneaking here after us, send it off the wrong way, with a flea in its ear."

Mrs. Saunders promised, between tears and laughter; blessed Waife, kissed Sophy, patted Sir Isaac, and stood long at her threshold watching the three, as the early sun lit their forms receding in the green narrow lane—dewdrops sparkling on the hedgerows, and the skylark springing upward from the young corn.

Then she slowly turned in-doors, and her home seemed very solitary. We can accustom ourselves to loneliness, but we should beware of infringing the custom. Once admit two or three faces seated at your hearthside, or gazing out from your windows on the laughing sun, and when they are gone, they carry off the glow from your grate and the sunbeam from your panes. Poor Mrs. Saunders! in vain she sought to rouse herself, to put the rooms to rights, to attend to the chickens, to distract her thoughts. The one-eyed cripple, the little girl, the shaggy-faced dog, still haunted her; and when at noon she dined all alone off the remnants of the last night's social supper, the very click of the renovated clock seemed to say, "Gone, gone;" and muttering, "Ah! gone," she reclined back on her chair, and indulged herself in a good womanlike cry. From this luxury she was startled by a knock at the door. "Could they have come back?" No; the door opened, and a genteel young man, in a black coat and white neckcloth, stepped in.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am—your name's Saunders—sell poultry?"

"At your service, sir. Spring chickens?" Poor people, whatever their grief, must sell their chickens, if they have any to sell.

"Thank you, ma'am; not at this moment. The fact is, that I call to make some inquiries. Have not you lodgers here?"

Lodgers! at that word the expanding soul of Mrs. Saunders reclosed hermetically; the last warning of Waife revibrated in her ears: this white-neckclothed gentleman, was he not a rat?

"No, sir, I han't no lodgers."

"But you have had some lately, eh? a crippled elderly man and a little girl."

"Don't know anything about them; leastways," said Mrs. Saunders, suddenly remembering that she was told less to deny facts than to send inquiries upon wrong directions—"leastways, at this blessed time. Pray, sir, what makes you ask?"

"Why, I was instructed to come down to ——, and find out where this person, one William Waife, had gone. Arrived yesterday, ma'am. All I could hear is, that a person answering to his description left the place several days ago, and had been seen by a boy, who was tending sheep, to come down the lane to your house, and you were supposed to have lodgers—(you take lodgers sometimes, I think, ma'am)—because you had been buying some trifling articles of food not in your usual way of custom. Circumstantial evidence, ma'am—you can have no motive to conceal the truth."

"I should think not indeed, sir," retorted Mrs. Saunders, whom the omnious words "circumstantial evidence" set doubly on her guard. "I did see a gentleman such as you mention, and a pretty young lady, about ten days agone, or so, and they did lodge here a night or two, but they are gone to—"

"Yes, ma'am—gone where?"

"Lunnon."

"Really—very likely. By the train or on foot?"

"On foot, I s'pose."

"Thank you, ma'am. If you should see them again, or hear where they are, oblige me by conveying this card to Mr. Waife. My employer, ma'am, Mr. Gotobed, Craven Street, Strand—eminent solicitor. He has something of importance to communicate to Mr. Waife."

"Yes, sir—a lawyer; I understand." And as of all rat-like animals in the world Mrs. Saunders had the ignorance to deem a lawyer was the most emphatically devouring, she congratulated herself with her whole heart on the white lies she had told in favor of the intended victims.

The black-coated gentleman having thus obeyed his instructions, and attained his object, nodded, went his way, and regained the fly which he had left at the turnstile. "Back to the inn," cried he—"quick—I must be in time for the three o'clock train to London."

And thus terminated the result of the great barrister's first instructions to his eminent solicitor to discover a lame man and a little girl. No inquiry, on the whole, could have been more skilfully conducted. Mr. Gotobed sends his head clerk—the head clerk employs the policeman of the village—gets upon the right track—comes to the right house—and is altogether in the wrong—in a manner highly creditable to his researches.

"In London, of course—all people of that kind come back to London," said Mr. Gotobed. "Give me the heads in writing, that I may report to my distinguished client. Most satisfactory. That young man will push his way—business-like and methodical."

CHAPTER VII.

The cloud has its silver lining.

THUS turning his back on the good fortune which he had so carefully cautioned Mrs. Saunders against favoring on his behalf, the vagrant was now on his way to the ancient municipal town of Gatesboro', which, being the nearest place of fitting opulence and population, Mr. Waife had resolved to honor with the *début* of Sir Isaac as soon as he had appropriated to himself the services of that promising quadruped. He had consulted a map of the county before quitting Mr. Merle's roof, and ascertained that he could reach Gatesboro' by a short cut for foot-travellers along fields and lanes. He was always glad to avoid the high-road: doubtless for such avoidance he had good reasons. But prudential reasons were in this instance supported by vagrant inclinations. High-roads are for the prosperous. By-paths and ill-luck go together. But by-paths have their charm, and ill-luck its pleasant moments.

They passed, then, from the high-road into a long succession of green pastures, through which a straight public path conducted them into one of those charming lanes never seen out of this bowery England—a lane deep sunk amidst high banks, with overhanging oaks, and quivering ash, gnarled Wych-elm, vivid holly, and shaggy brambles, with wild convolvulus and creeping woodbine forcing sweet life through all. Sometimes the banks opened abruptly, leaving patches of greensward, and peeps through still sequestered gates, or over moss-grown pales, into the park or paddock of some rural thane. New villas or old manor-houses on lawny uplands, knitting, as it were, together, England's feudal memories with England's freeborn hopes—the old land with its young people; for England is so old, and the English are so young! And the gray cripple and the bright-haired child often paused, and gazed upon the demesnes and homes of owners whose lots were cast in such pleasant places. But there was no grudging envy in their gaze; perhaps because their life was too remote from those grand belongings. And therefore they could enjoy and possess every banquet of the eye. For at least the beauty of what we see is ours for the moment, on the simple condition that we do not covet the thing which gives to our eyes that beauty. As the measureless sky and the unnumbered stars are equally granted to king and to beggar—and in our wildest ambition we do not sigh for a monopoly of the empyrean, or the fee-simple of the planets—so the earth too, with all its fenced gardens and embattled walls—all its landmarks of stern property and churlish ownership—is ours too by right of eye. Ours to gaze on the fair possessions with such delight as the gaze can give; grudging to the unseen owner his other, and, it may be, more troubled rights, as little as we grudge an astral proprietor his acres of light in Capricorn. Benignant is the law that saith, "*Thou shall not covet.*"

When the sun was at the highest, our wayfarers found a shadowy nook for their rest and repast. Before them, ran a shallow limpid trout-stream; on the other side its margin, low grassy meadows, a farm-house at the distance, backed by a still grove, from which rose a still church-tower and its still spire. Behind them, a close-shaven sloping law terminated the hedgerow of the lane; seen clearly above it, with parterres of flowers on the sward—drooping lilacs and laburnums farther back, and a pervading fragrance from the brief-lived and rich syringas. The cripple had climbed over a wooden rail that separated the lane from the rill, and seated himself under the shade of a fantastic hollow thorn-tree. Sophy, reclined beside him, was gathering some pale scentless

violets from a mound which the brambles had guarded from the sun. The dog had descended to the waters to quench his thurst, but still stood knee-deep in the shallow stream, and appeared lost in philosophical contemplation of a swarm of minnows which his immersion had disturbed, but which now made itself again visible on the further side of the glassy brook, undulating round and round a tiny rocklet which interrupted the glide of the waves, and caused them to break into a low melodious murmur. "For these and all thy mercies, O Lord, make us thankful," said the Victim of Ill-luck, in the tritest words of a pious custom. But never, perhaps, at aldermanic feasts was the grace more sincerely said.

And then he untied the bundle, which the dog, who had hitherto carried it by the way, had now carefully deposited at his side. "As I live," ejeculated Waife, "Mrs. Saunders is a woman in ten thousand. See Sophy, not contented with the bread and cheese to which I bade her stint her beneficence, a whole chicken —a little cake too for you, Sophy; she has not even forgotten the salt. Sophy, that woman deserves the handsomest token of our gratitude; and we will present her with a silver teapot the first moment we can afford it."

His spirits exhilarated by the unexpected good cheer, the Comedian gave way to his naturally blithe humor; and between every mouthful he rattled or rather drolled on, now infant-like, now sage-like. He cast out the rays of his liberal humor, careless where they fell—on the child—on the dog—on the fishes that played beneath the wave—on the cricket that chirped amidst the grass: the woodpecker tapped the tree, and the cripple's merry voice answered it in bird-like mimicry. To this riot of genial babble there was a listener, of whom neither grandfather nor grandchild was aware. Concealed by thick brushwood a few paces farther on, a young angler, who might be five or six and twenty, had seated himself just before the arrival of our vagrant to those banks and waters, for the purpose of changing an unsuccessful fly. At the sound of voices, perhaps suspecting an unlicensed rival—for that part of the stream was preserved—he had suspended his task, and noiselessly put aside the clustering leaves to reconnoitre. The piety of Waife's simple grace seemed to surprise him pleasingly, for a sweet approving smile crossed his lips. He continued to look and to listen. He forgot the fly, and a trout sailed him by unheeded.

But Sir Isaac, having probably satisfied his speculative mind as to the natural attributes of minnows, now slowly reascended the bank, and after a brief halt and a sniff, walked majestically towards the hidden observer, looked at him with great solemnity, and uttered an inquisitive bark—a bark not hostile, not menacing; purely and drily interrogative. Thus detected, the angler rose; and Waife, whose attention was attracted that way by the bark, saw him, called to Sir Isaac, and said politely, "There is no harm in my dog, sir."

The young man muttered some inaudible reply, and, lifting up his rod, as in sign of his occupation or excuse for his vicinity, came out from the intervening foliage, and stepped quietly to Waife's side. Sir Isaac followed him — sniffed again — seemed satisfied; and seated himself on his haunches, fixed his attention upon the remains of the chicken which lay defenceless on the grass. The newcomer was evidently of the rank of gentleman; his figure was slim and graceful, his face pale, meditative, refined. He would have impressed you at once with the idea of what he really was—an Oxford scholar; and you would, perhaps, have guessed him designed for the ministry of the Church, if not actually in orders.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mr. Waife excites the admiration, and benignly pities the infirmity of an Oxford scholar.

"You are str—str—strangers?" said the Oxonian, after a violent exertion to express himself, caused by an impediment in his speech.

Waife.—"Yes, sir, travellers. I trust we are not trespassing: this is not private ground, I think?"

Oxonian. — "And if—f—f—f it were, my f—f—father would not war—n—n you off—ff—f."

"Is it your father's ground then? Sir, I beg you a thousand pardons."

The apology was made in the Comedian's grandest style—it imposed greatly on the

young scholar. Waife might have been a duke in disguise; but I will do the angler the justice to say that such discovery of rank would have impressed him little more in the vagrant's favor. It had been that impromptu "grace"—that thanksgiving which the scholar felt was something more than the carnal food—which had first commanded his respect and wakened his interest. Then that innocent careless talk, part uttered to dog and child—part soliloquized—part thrown out to the ears of the lively teeming Nature, had touched a somewhat kindred chord in the angler's soul, for he was somewhat of a poet and much of a soliloquist, and could confer with Nature, nor feel that the impediment in speech which obstructed his intercourse with men. Having thus far indicated that oral defect in our new acquaintance, the reader will cheerfully excuse me for not enforcing it overmuch. Let it be among the things *subaudita*, as the sense of it gave to a gifted and aspiring nature, thwarted in the sublime career of Preacher, an exquisite mournful pain. And I no more like to raise a laugh at his infirmity behind his back, than I should before his pale, powerful melancholy face—therefore I suppress the infirmity, in giving the reply.

OXONIAN.—"On the other side the lane where the garden slopes downward is my father's house. This ground is his property certainly, but he puts it to its best use, in lending it to those who so piously acknowledge that Father from whom all good comes. Your child, I presume, sir?"

"My grandchild."

"She seems delicate; I hope you have not far to go?"

"Not very far, thank you, sir. But my little girl looks more delicate than she is. You are not tired, darling?"

"Oh, not at all!" There was no mistaking the looks of real love interchanged between the old man and the child; the scholar felt much interested and somewhat puzzled. "Who and what could they be? so unlike foot wayfarers!" On the other hand, too, Waife took a liking to the courteous young man, and conceived a sincere pity for his physical affliction. But he did not for those reasons depart from the discreet caution he had prescribed to himself in seeking new fortunes and shunning old perils, so he turned the subject.

"You are an angler, sir? I suppose the trout in the stream run small?"

"Not very—a little higher up I have caught them at four pounds weight."

WAIFE.—"There goes a fine fish yonder—see! balancing himself between those weeds."

OXONIAN.—"Poor fellow, let him be safe to-day. After all, it is a cruel sport, and I should break myself off it. But it is strange that whatever our love for Nature, we always seek some excuse for trusting ourselves alone to her. A gun—a rod—a sketch-book—a geologist's hammer—an entomologist's net—a something."

WAIFE.—"Is it not because all our ideas would run wild if not concentrated on a definite pursuit? Fortune and Nature are earnest females, though popular beauties; and they do not look upon coquetish triflers in the light of genuine wooers."

The Oxonian, who, in venting his previous remark, had thought it likely he should be above his listener's comprehension, looked surprised. What pursuits, too, had this one-eyed philosopher!

"You have a definite pursuit, sir?"

"I—alas—when a man moralizes, it is a sign that he has known error: it is because I have been a trifler that I rail against triflers. And talking of that, time flies, and we must be off and away."

Sophy re-tied the bundle. Sir Isaac, on whom, meanwhile, she had bestowed the remains of the chicken, jumped up and described a circle.

"I wish you success in your pursuit, whatever it be," stuttered out the angler.

"And I no less heartily, sir, wish you success in yours."

"Mine! Success there is beyond my power."

"How, sir? Does it rest so much with others?"

"No, my failure is in myself. My career should be the Church, my pursuit the cure of souls, and—and—this pitiful infirmity! How can I speak the Divine Word—I—I—a stutterer!"

The young man did not pause for an answer, but plunged through the brushwood that bespread the banks of the rill, and his hurried path could be traced by the wave of the foliage through which he forced his way.

"We all have our burdens," said Gentleman Waife; as Sir Isaac took up the bundle and stalked on, placid and refreshed.

CHAPTER IX.

The Nomad, entering into civilized life, adopts its arts, shaves his poodle, and puts on a black coat. Hints at the process by which a Cast-off exalts himself into a take-in.

At twilight they stopped at a quiet inn within eight miles of Gatesboro'. Sophy, much tired, was glad to creep to bed. Waife sate up long after her; and, in preparation for the eventful morrow, washed and shaved Sir Isaac. You would not have known the dog again; he was dazzling. Not Ulysses, rejuvinated by Pallas Athenè, could have been more changed for the better. His flanks revealed a skin most daintily mottled; his tail became leonine, with an imperial tuft; his mane fell in long curls like the beard of a Ninevite king; his boots were those of a courtier in the reign of Charles II.; his eyes looked forth in dark splendor from locks white as the driven snow. This feat performed, Waife slept the peace of the righteous, and Sir Isaac, stretched on the floor beside the bed, licked his mottled flanks and shivered—"*Il faut souffrir pour être beau.*" Much marvelling, Sophy the next morning beheld the dog; but before she was up, Waife had paid the bill and was waiting for her on the road, impatient to start. He did not heed her exclamations, half compassionate, half admiring; he was absorbed in thought. Thus they proceeded slowly on till within two miles of the town, and then Waife turned aside, entered a wood, and there, with the aid of Sophy, put the dog upon a deliberate rehearsal of the anticipated drama. The dog was not in good spirits, but he went through his part with mechanical accuracy, though slight enthusiasm.

"He is to be relied upon, in spite of his French origin," said Waife. "All national prejudice fades before the sense of a common interest. And we shall always find more genuine solidity of character in a French poodle than in an English mastiff, whenever a poodle is of use to us, and the mastiff is not. But oh, waste of care! oh, sacrifice of time to empty names! oh, emblem of fashionable education! It never struck me before—does it not, child though thou art, strike thee now—by the necessities of our drama, this animal must be a French dog?"

"Well, grandfather?"

"And we have given him an English name! Precious result of our own scholastic training; taught at preparatory academies precisely that which avails us naught when we are to face the world! What is to be done? Unlearn him his own cognomen—teach him another name; too late, too late. We cannot afford the delay."

"I don't see why he should be called any name at all. He observes your signs just as well without."

"If I had but discovered that at the beginning. Pity! Such a fine name, too. Sir Isaac! *Vanitas vanitatum!* What desire chiefly kindles the ambitious? To create a name—perhaps bequeath a title—exalt into Sir Isaacs a progeny of Mops! And after all, it is possible (let us hope it in this instance) that a sensible young dog may learn his letters and shoulder his musket just as well though all the appellations by which humanity knows him be condensed into a pitiful monosyllable. Nevertheless (as you will find when you are older), people are obliged in practice to renounce for themselves the application of those rules which they philosophically prescribe for others. Thus, while I grant that a change of name for *that* dog is a question belonging to the policy of Ifs and Buts, commonly called the policy of Expediency, about which one may differ with others and one's own self every quarter of an hour—a change of name for me belongs to the policy of Must and Shall—viz., the policy of Necessity, against which let no dog bark,—though I have known dogs howl at it! William Waife is no more; he is dead—he is buried; and even Juliet Araminta is the baseless fabric of a vision."

Sophy raised inquiringly her blue guileless eyes.

"You see before you a man who has used up the name of Waife, and who, on entering the town of Gatesboro', becomes a sober, staid, and respectable personage, under the appellation of Chapman. You are Miss Chapman. Rugge and his Exhibition 'leave not a wrack behind.'"

Sophy smiled, and then sighed—the smile for her grandfather's gay spirits; wherefore the sigh? Was it that some instinct in that fresh, loyal nature, revolted from the thought of these aliases, which, if requisite for safety, were still akin to imposture. If so, poor child, she had much yet to set right with her conscience! All I can say is, that after she had smiled she sighed. And more reasonably might a reader ask his author to subject a zephyr to the microscope than a female's sigh to analysis.

"Take the dog with you, my dear, back into the lane; I will join you in a few minutes. You are neatly dressed, and if not, would look so. I, in this old coat, have the air of a pedlar, so I will change it, and enter the town of Gatesboro' in the character of—a man whom you will soon see before you. Leave those things alone, de-Isaacised Sir Isaac! Follow your mistress—go!"

Sophy left the wood, and walked on slowly towards the town, with her hand pensively resting on Sir Isaac's head. In less than ten minutes she was joined by Waife, attired in respectable black; his hat and shoes well brushed; a new green shade to his eye; and with his finest air of *Père Noble*. He was now in his favorite element. HE WAS ACTING—call it not imposture. Was Lord Chatham an impostor when he draped his flannels into the folds of the toga, and arranged the curls of his wig so as to add more sublime effect to the majesty of his brow and the terrors of its nod? And certainly, considering that Waife, after all, was but a professional vagabond—considering all the turns and shifts to which he has been put for bread and salt—the wonder is, not that he is full of stage tricks, and small deceptions, but that he has contrived to retain at heart so much childish simplicity. When a man for a series of years has only had his wits to live by, I say not that he is necessarily a rogue—he may be a good fellow; but you can scarcely expect his code of honor to be percisely the same as Sir Philip Sidney's. Homer expresses, through the lips of Achilles, that sublime love of truth, which even in those remote times, was the becoming characteristic of a gentleman and a soldier.

But then, Achilles is well off during his whole life, which, though distinguished, is short. On the other hand, Ulysses, who is sorely put to it, kept out of his property in Ithaca, and, in short, living on his wits, is not the less befriended by the immaculate Pallas, because his wisdom savours somewhat of stage trick and sharp practice. And as to convenient aliases and white fibs, where would have been the use of his wits, if Ulysses had disdained such arts, and been magnanimously munched up by Polyphemus? Having thus touched on the epic side of Mr. Waife's character with the clemency due to human nature, but with the caution required by the interests of society, permit him to resume a "duplex course," sanctioned by ancient precedent, but not commended to modern imitation.

Just as our travellers neared the town, the screech of a railway whistle resounded towards the right—a long train rushed from the jaws of a tunnel, and shot into the neighboring station.

"How lucky!" exclaimed Waife; "make haste, my dear!" Was he going to take the train? Pshaw! he was at his journey's end. He was going to mix with the throng that would soon stream through those white gates into the town; he was going to purloin the respectable appearance of a passenger by the train. And so well did he act the part of a bewildered stranger just vomited forth into unfamiliar places by one of those panting steam monsters, so artfully amidst the busy competition of nudging elbows, over-bearing shoulders, and the *impedimenta* of carpet-bags, portmanteaus, babies in arms, and shin-assailing trucks, did he look round, consequentially, on the *qui vive*, turning his one eye, now on Sophy, now on Sir Isaac, and griping his bundle to his breast as if he suspected all his neighbors to be Thugs, condottieri, and swell-mob, that in an instant fly-men, omnibus-drivers, cads, and porters marked him for their own. "Gatesboro' Arms," "Spread Eagle," "Royal Hotel," "Saracen's Head—very comfortable, centre of High Street, opposite the Town Hall,"—were, shouted, bawled, whispered, or whined into his ear. "*Is* there an honest porter?" asked the Comedian piteously. An Irishman presented himself. "And is it meself can serve your honor?"—"Take this bundle, and walk on before me to the High Street."—"Could not I take the bundle, grandfather? The man will charge so much," said the prudent Sophy. "Hush! you indeed!" said the *Père Noble*

as if addressing an exiled *Altesse royale*—"you take a bundle—Miss—Chapman!"

They soon gained the High Street. Waife examined the fronts of the various inns which they passed by, with an eye accustomed to decipher the physiognomy of hostelries. "The Saracen's Head" pleased him, though its imposing size daunted Sophy. He arrested the steps of the porter, "Follow me close," and stepped across the open threshold into the bar. The landlady herself was there, portly and imposing, with an auburn *toupet*, a silk gown, a cameo brooch, and an ample bosom.

"You have a private sitting-room, ma'am?" said the Comedian, lifting his hat. There are so many ways of lifting a hat—for instance, the way for which Louis XIV. was so renowned. But the Comedian's way on the present occasion rather resembled that of the late Duke of B***—not quite royal, but as near to royalty as becomes a subject. He added, recovering his head—"And on the first floor?" The landlady did not curtsy, but she bowed, emerged from the bar, and set foot on the broad stairs; then, looking back graciously, her eyes rested on Sir Isaac, who had stalked forth in advance, and with expansive nostrils sniffed. She hesitated. "Your dog, sir! shall Boots take it round to the stables?"

"The stables, ma'am—the stables, my dear," turning to Sophy, with a smile more ducal than the previous bow; "what would they say at home if they heard that noble animal was consigned to—stables? Ma'am, my dog is my companion, and as much accustomed to drawing-rooms as I am myself." Still the landlady paused. The dog might be accustomed to drawing-rooms, but her drawing-room was not accustomed to dogs. She had just laid down a new carpet. And such are the strange and erratic affinities in nature—such are the incongruous concatenations in the cross-stitch of ideas, that there are associations between dogs and carpets, which, if wrongful to the owners of dogs, beget no unreasonable apprehensions in the proprietors of carpets. So there stood the landlady, and there stood the dog! and there they might be standing to this day had not the Comedian dissolved the spell. "Take up my effects again," said he, turning to the porter; "doubtless they are more habituated to distinguish between dog and dog at the Royal Hotel."

The landlady was mollified in a moment. Nor was it only the rivalries that necessarily existed between the Saracen's Head and the Royal Hotel that had due weight with her. A gentleman who could not himself deign to carry even that small bundle, must be indeed a gentleman! Had he come with a portmanteau—even with a carpet-bag—the porter's service would have been no evidence of rank; but accustomed as she was chiefly to gentlemen engaged in commercial pursuits, it was new to her experience,—a gentleman with effects so light, and hands so aristocratically helpless. Herein were equally betokened the two attributes of birth and wealth—viz., the habit of command, and the disdain of shillings. A vague remembrance of the well-known story how a man and his dog had arrived at the Granby Hotel, at Harrogate, and been sent away roomless to the other and less patrician establishment, because, while he had a dog, he had not a servant; when, five minutes after such a dismissal, came carriages and lackeys, and an imperious valet, asking for his grace the Duke of A——, who had walked on before with his dog, and who, O everlasting thought of remorse! had been sent away to bring the other establishment into fashion;—a vague reminiscence of that story, I say, flashed upon the landlady's mind, and she exclaimed, "I only thought, sir, you might prefer the stables; of course, it is as you please—this way, sir. He is a fine animal, indeed, and seems mild."

"You may bring up the bundle, porter," quoth the *Père Noble*. "Take my arm, my dear; these steps are very steep."

The landlady threw open the door of a handsome sitting-room—her best: she pulled down the blinds to shut out the glare of the sun, then, retreating to the threshold, awaited further orders.

"Rest yourself, my dear," said the Actor, placing Sophy on a couch with that tender respect for sex and childhood which so especially belongs to the high-bred. "The room will do ma'am. I will let you know later whether we shall require beds. As to dinner, I am not particular—a cutlet—a chicken—what you please—at seven o'clock. Stay, I beg your pardon for detaining you; but where does the Mayor live?"

"His private residence is a mile out of the

town; but his counting-house is just above the Town Hall—to the right, sir!"

"Name?"

"Mr. Hartopp!"

"Hartopp! Ah! to be sure! Hartopp. His political opinions, I think, are" (ventures at a guess) "enlightened?"

LANDLADY.—"Very much so, sir. Mr. Hartopp is highly respected."

WAIFE.—"The chief municipal officer of a town so thriving—fine shops and much plate glass—must march with the times. I think I have heard that Mr. Hartopp promotes the spread of intelligence and the propagation of knowledge."

LANDLADY (rather puzzled).—"I dare say, sir. The Mayor takes great interest in Gatesboro' Athenæum and Literary Institute."

WAIFE.—"Exactly what I should have presumed from his character and station. I will detain you no longer, ma'am" (Ducal bow). The landlady descended the stairs. Was her guest a candidate for the representation of the town at the next election? March with the times!—spread of intelligence! All candidates she ever knew had that way of expressing themselves—"March" and "Spread." Not an address had parliamentary aspirant put forth to the freemen and electors of Gatesboro' but what "March" had been introduced by the candidate, and "Spread" been suggested by the Committee. Still she thought that her guest, upon the whole, looked and bowed more like a member of the Upper House. Perhaps one of the amiable though occasionally prosy peers who devote the teeth of wisdom to the cracking of those very hard nuts—"How to educate the masses," "What to do with our criminals," and suchlike problems, upon which already have been broken so many jawbones tough as that with which Samson slew the Philistines.

"Oh, grandfather," sighed Sophy, "what are you about? We shall be ruined—you, too, who are so careful not to get into debt. And what have we left to pay the people here?"

"Sir Isaac! and THIS!" returned the Comedian, touching his forehead. "Do not alarm yourself—stay here and repose—and don't let Sir Isaac out of the room on any account!"

He took off his hat, brushed the nap carefully with his sleeve, replaced it on his head—not jauntily aside—not like a *jeune premier*, but with equilateral brims, and in composed fashion, like a *père noble*—then, making a sign to Sir Isaac to rest quiet, he passed to the door; there he halted, and turning towards Sophy, and meeting her wistful eyes, his own eye moistened. "Ah!" he murmured, "heaven grant I may succeed now, for if I do, then you shall indeed be a little lady!"

He was gone.

CHAPTER X.

Showing with what success Gentleman Waife assumes the pleasing part of Friend to the enlightenment of the Age and the Progress of the People.

ON the landing-place, Waife encountered the Irish porter, who, having left the bundle in the drawing-room, was waiting patiently to be paid for his trouble.

The Comedian surveyed the good-humored shrewd face, on every line of which was writ the golden maxim, "Take things asy." "I beg your pardon, my friend; I had almost forgotten you. Have you been long in this town?"

"Four years—and long life to your honor!"

"Do you know Mr. Hartopp, the Mayor?"

"Is it his worship the Mayor? Sure and it is the Mayor as has made a man o' Mike Callaghan."

The Comedian evinced urbane curiosity to learn the history of that process, and drew forth a grateful tale. Four summers ago Mike had resigned the "first gem of the sea" in order to assist in making hay for a Saxon taskmaster. Mr. Hartopp who farmed largely, had employed him in that rural occupation. Seized by a malignant fever, Mr. Hartopp had helped him through it, and naturally conceived a liking for the man he helped. Thus, as Mike became convalescent, instead of passing the poor man back to his own country, which at that time gave little employment to the surplus of its agrarian population beyond an occasional shot at a parson, an employment, though animated, not lucrative, he exercised Mike's returning strength upon a few light jobs in his warehouse; and finally, Mike marrying imprudently the daughter of a Gatesboro' operative, Mr. Hartopp set him up in life as a

professional messenger and porter, patronized by the Corporation. The narrative made it evident that Mr. Hartopp was a kind and worthy man, and the Comedian's heart warmed towards him.

"An honor to our species, this Mr. Hartopp!" said Waife, striking his staff upon the floor; "I covet his acquaintance. Would he see you if you called at his counting-house?"

Mike replied in the affirmative with eager pride, "Mr. Hartopp would see him at once. Sure, did not the Mayor know that time was money? Mr. Hartopp was not a man to keep the poor waiting."

"Go down and stay outside the hall door; you shall take a note for me to the Mayor."

Waife then passed into the bar, and begged the favor of a sheet of note-pape. The landlady seated him at her own desk—and thus wrote the Comedian:—

"Mr. Chapman presents his compliments to the Mayor of Gatesboro', and requests the honor of a very short interview. Mr. Chapman's deep interest in the permanent success of those literary institutes which are so distinguished a feature of this enlighted age, and Mr. Mayor's well-known zeal in the promotion of those invaluable societies, must be Mr. Chapman's excuse for the liberty he ventures to take in this request. Mr. C. may add that of late he has earnestly directed his attention to the best means of extracting new uses from those noble but undeveloped institutions.—*Saracen's Head*, etc."

This epistle, duly sealed and addressed, Waife delivered to the care of Mike Callaghan—and simultaneously he astounded that functionary with no less a gratuity than half a crown. Cutting short the fervent blessings which this generous donation naturally called forth, the Comedian said, with his happiest combination of suavity and loftiness, "And should the Mayor ask you what sort of person I am—for I have not the honor to be known to him, and there are so many adventurers about, that he might reasonably expect me to be one—perhaps you can say that I don't look like a person he need be afraid to admit. You know a gentleman by sight! Bring back an answer as soon as may be; perhaps I shan't stay long in the town. You will find me in the High Street, looking at the shops."

The porter took to his legs—impatient to vent his overflowing heart upon the praises of this munificent stranger. A gentleman, indeed—Mike should think so. If Make's good word with the Mayor was worth money, Gentleman Waife had put his half-crown out upon famous interest.

The Comedian strolled along the High Street, and stopped before a stationer's shop, at the window of which was displayed a bill, entitled—

GATESBORO' ATHENÆUM AND LITERARY INSTITUTE.

LECTURE ON CONCHOLOGY,

By Professor Long,

Author of "Researches into the Natural History of Limpets."

Waife entered the shop, and lifted his hat,—"Permit me, sir, to look at that hand-bill."

"Certainly, sir; but the lecture is over—you can see by the date; it came off last week. We allow the bills of previous proceedings at our Athenæum to be exposed at the window till the new bills are prepared—keeps the whole thing alive, sir."

"Conchology," said the Comedian, "is a subject which requires deep research, and on which a learned man may say much without fear of contradiction. But how far is Gatesboro' from the British Ocean?"

"I don't know exactly, sir—a long way."

"Then, as shells are not familiar to the youthful remembrances of your fellow-townsmen, possibly the lecturer may have found an audience rather select than numerous."

"It was a very attentive audience, sir—and highly respectable—Miss Grieve's young ladies (the genteelest seminary in the town) attended."

Waife.—"Highly creditable to the young ladies. But, pardon me, is your Athenæum a *Mechanic's* institute?"

Shopman.—"It was so called at first. But, some how or other, the mere operatives fell off, and it was though advisable to change the word 'Mechanics' into the word 'Literary.' Gatesboro' is not a manufacturing town, and the mechanics here do not realize the expectations of that taste for abstract science on which the originators of these societies founded their——"

Waife (insinuatingly interrupting).—"Their calculations of intellectual progress and their tables of pecuniary return. Few of these so-

cieties, I am told, are really self-supporting—I suppose Professor Long is !—and if he resides in Gatesboro', and writes on limpets, he is probably a man of independent fortune."

SHOPMAN.—"Why, sir, the professor was engaged from London—five guineas and his travelling expenses. The funds of the society could ill afford such outlay; but we have a most worthy Mayor, who, assisted by his foreman, Mr. Williams, our treasurer, is, I may say, the life and soul of the institute."

"A literary man himself, your Mayor?"

The shopman smiled. Not much in that way, sir; but anything to enlighten the working classes. This is Professor Long's great work upon limpets, two vols. post octavo. The Mayor has just presented it to the library of the institute. I was cutting the leaves when you came in."

"Very prudent in you, sir. If limpets were but able to read printed character in the Engglish tongue, this work would have more interest for them than the ablest investigations upon the political and social history of man. But," added the Comedian, shaking his head mournfully, "the human species is not testaceous—and what the history of man might be to a limpet, the history of limpets is to a man." So saying, Mr. Waife bought a sheet of cardboard and some gilt foil, relifted his hat, and walked out.

The shopman scratched his head thoughtfully; he glanced from his window at the form of the receding stranger, and mechanically resumed the task of cutting those leaves, which, had the volumes reached the shelves of the Library uncut, would have so remained to the crack of doom.

Mike Callaghan now came in sight, striding fast, "Mr. Mayor sends his love—bother-o'-me—his respex; and will be happy to see your honor."

In three minutes more the Comedian was seated in a little parlor that adjoined Mr. Hartopp's counting-house—Mr. Hartopp seated also, *vis-à-vis*. The Mayor had one of those countenances upon which good-nature throws a sunshine softer than Claude ever shed upon canvas. Josiah Hartopp had risen in life by little other art than that of quiet kindliness. As a boy at school, he had been ever ready to do a good turn to his schoolfellows; and his schoolfellows at last formed themselves into a kind of police, for the purpose of protecting Jos. Hartopp's pence and person from the fists and fingers of each other. He was evidently so anxious to please his master, not from fear of the rod, but the desire to spare that worthy man the pain of inflicting it, that he had more trouble taken with his education than was bestowed on the brightest intellect that school ever reared; and where other boys were roughly flogged, Jos. Hartopp was soothingly patted on the head, and told not to be cast down, but try again. The same evenhanded justice returned the sugared chalice to his lips in his apprenticeship to an austere leather-seller, who, not bearing the thought to lose sight of so mild a face, raised him into partnership, and ultimately made him his son-in-law and residuary legatee.

Then Mr. Hartopp yielded to the advice of friends who desired his exaltation, and from a leather-seller became a tanner. Hides themselves softened their asperity to that gentle dealer, and melted into golden fleeces. He became rich enough to hire a farm for health and recreation. He knew little of husbandry, but he won the heart of a bailiff who might have reared a turnip from a deal table. Gradually the farm became his fee-simple, and the farm-house expanded into a villa. Wealth and honors flowed in from a brimmed horn. The surliest man in the town would have been ashamed of saying a rude thing to Jos. Hartopp. If he spoke in public, though he hummed and hawed lamentable, no one was so respectfully listened to. As for the parliamentary representation of the town, he could have returned himself for one seat and Mike Callaghan for the other, had he been so disposed. But he was too full of the milk of humanity to admit into his veins a drop from the gall of party. He suffered others to legislate for his native land, and (except on one occasion, when he had been persuaded to assist in canvassing, not indeed the electors of Gatesboro' but those of a distant town, in which he possessed some influence, on behalf of a certain eminent orator) Jos. Hartopp was only visible in politics whenever Parliament was to be petitioned in favor of some humane measure, or against a tax that would have harassed the poor.

If anything went wrong with him in his business, the whole town combined to set it right for him. Was a child born to him,

Gatesboro' rejoiced as a mother. Did measles or scarlatina afflict his neighborhood, the first anxiety of Gatesboro' was for Mr. Hartopp's nursery. No one would have said Mrs. Hartopp's nursery; and when in such a department the man's name supersedes the woman's, can more be said in proof of the tenderness he excites? In short, Jos. Hartopp was a notable instance of a truth not commonly recognized—viz., that affection is power, and that, if you do make it thoroughly and uneqivocally clear that you love your neighbors, though it may not be quite so well as you love yourself,—still, cordially and disinterestedly, you will find your neighbors much better fellows than Mrs. Grundy gives them credit for,—but always provided that your talents be not such as to excite their envy, nor your opinions such as to offend their prejudices.

MR. HARTOPP.—"You take an interest, you say, in literary institutes, and have studied the subject?"

THE COMEDIAN.—"Of late, those institutes have occupied my thoughts as presenting the readiest means of collecting liberal ideas into a profitable focus."

MR. HARTOPP.—"Certainly it is a great thing to bring classes together in friendly union."

THE COMEDIAN.—"For laudable objects."

MR. HARTOPP.—"To cultivate their understandings."

THE COMEDIAN.—"To warm their hearts."

MR. HARTOPP.—"To give them useful knowledge."

THE COMEDIAN.—"And pleasurable sensations."

MR. HARTOPP.—"In a word, to instruct them."

THE COMEDIAN.—"And to amuse."

"Eh!" said the Mayor—"amuse!"

Now, every one about the person of this amiable man was on the constant guard to save him from the injurious effects of his own benevolence; and accordingly his foreman, hearing that he was closeted with a stranger, took alarm, and entered on pretence of asking instructions about an order for hides,—in reality, to glower upon the intruder, and keep his master's hands out of imprudent pockets.

Mr. Hartopp, who, though not brilliant, did not want for sense, and was a keener observer than was generally supposed, divined, the kindly intentions of his assistant.

"A gentleman interested in the Gatesboro' Athenæum. My foreman, sir—Mr. Williams, the treasurer of our Institute. Take a chair, Williams."

"You said to amuse, Mr. Chapman, but—"

"You did not find Professor Long on conchology amusing?"

"Why," said the Mayor, smiling blandly, "I myself am not a man of science, and therefore his lecture, though profound, was a little dry to me."

"Must it not have been still more dry to your workmen, Mr. Mayor?"

"They did not attend," said Williams. "Uphill task we have to secure the Gatesboro' mechanics, when anything really solid is to be addressed to their understandings."

"Poor things, they are so tired at night," said the Mayor compassionately; "but they wish to improve themselves, and they take books from the library."

"Novels," quoth the stern Williams,—"it will be long before they take out that valuable 'History of Limpets.'"

"If a lecture was as amusing as a novel, would not they attend it?" asked the Comedian.

"I suppose they would," returned Mr. Williams. "But our object is to instruct; and instruction, sir—"

"Could be made amusing. If, for instance, the lecturer could produce a live shell-fish, and, by showing what kindness can do towards developing intellect and affection in beings without soul,—make man himself more kind to his fellow man?"

Mr. Williams laughed grimly.—"Well, sir!"

"This is what I should propose to do."

"With a shell-fish!" cried the Mayor.

"No, sir; with a creature of nobler attributes —A DOG!"

The listeners stared at each other like dumb animals as Waife continued—

"By winning interest for the individuality of a gifted quadruped, I should gradually create interest in the natural history of its species. I should lead the audience on to listen to comparisons with other members of the great family which once associated with Adam. I should lay the foundation for an instructive course of natural history, and from

vertebrated mammiferes who knows but we might gradually arrive at the nervous system of the molluscous division, and produce a sensation by the production of a limpet!"

"Theoretical," said Mr. Williams.

"Practical, sir; since I take it for granted that the Athenæum, at present, is rather a tax upon the richer subscribers, including Mr. Mayor."

"Nothing to speak of," said the mild Hartopp. Williams looked towards his master with unspeakable love, and groaned. "Nothing indeed—oh!"

"These societies should be wholly self-supporting," said the Comedian, "and inflict no pecuniary loss upon Mr. Mayor."

"Certainly," said Williams, "that is the right principle. Mr. Mayor should be protected."

"And if I show you how to make these societies self-supporting—"

"We should be very much obliged to you."

"I propose, then, to give an exhibition at your rooms."

Mr. Williams nudged the Mayor, and coughed, the Comedian not appearing to remark cough nor nudge.

"Of course gratuitously. I am not a professional lecturer, gentlemen."

Mr. Williams looked charmed to hear it.

"And when I have made my first effort successful, as I feel sure it will be, I will leave it to you, gentlemen, to continue my undertaking. But I cannot stay long here. If the day after to-morrow—"

"That is our ordinary *soirée* night," said the Mayor. "But you said a dog, sir—dogs not admitted—Eh, Williams?"

MR. WILLIAMS.—"A mere bye-law, which the sub-committee can suspend if necessary. But would not the introduction of a live animal be less dignified than—"

"A dead failure," put in the Comedian, gravely. The Mayor would have smiled, but he was afraid of doing so, lest it might hurt the feelings of Mr. Williams, who did not seem to take the joke.

"We are a purely intellectual body," said that latter gentleman, "and a dog—"

"A learned dog, I presume?" observed the Mayor.

MR. WILLIAMS (nodding).—"Might form a dangerous precedent for the introduction of other quadrupeds. We might thus descend even to the level of a learned pig. We are not a menagerie, Mr.—Mr.—"

"Chapman," said the Mayor, urbanely.

"Enough," said the Comedian, rising, with his grand air: "if I considered myself at liberty, gentlemen, to say who and what I am, you would be sure that I am not trifling with what *I* consider a very grave and important subject. As to suggesting anything derogatory to the dignity of science, and the eminent repute of the Gatesboro' Athenæum, it would be idle to vindicate myself. These gray hairs are——"

He did not conclude that sentence, save by a slight waive of the hand. The two burgesses bowed reverentially, and the Comedian went on—

"But when you speak of precedent, Mr. Williams, allow me to refer you to precedents in point. Aristotle wrote to Alexander the Great for animals to exhibit in the Literary Institute of Athens. At the colleges in Egypt lectures were delivered or a dog called Anubis, as inferior, I boldly assert, to that dog which I have referred to, as an Egyptian College to a British Institute. The ancient Etrurians, as is shown by the erudite Schweighæuser, in that passage—you understand Greek, I presume, Mr. Williams?"

Mr. Williams could not say he did.

THE COMEDIAN.—"Then I will not quote that passage in Schweighæuser upon the Molossian dogs in general, and the dog of Alcibiades in particular. But it proves beyond a doubt, that, in every ancient literary institute, learned dogs were highly estimated; and there was even a philosophical Academy called the Cynic—that is, Doggish, or Dog-school, of which Diogenes was the most eminent professor. He, you know, went about with a lanthorn looking for an honest man, and could not find one! Why? Because the Society of dogs had raised his standard of human honesty to an impracticable height. But I weary you; otherwise I could lecture on in this way for the hour together, if you think the Gatesboro' operatives prefer erudition to amusement."

"A great scholar," whispered Mr. Williams. —Aloud; "and I've nothing to say against your precedents, sir. I think you have made out that part of the case. But, after all, a

learned dog is not so very uncommon as to be in itself the striking attraction which you appear to suppose."

"It is not the mere learning of my dog of which I boast," replied the Comedian. "Dogs may be learned, and men too; but it is the way that learning is imparted, whether by dog or man, for the edification of the masses, in order, as Pope expresses himself, 'to raise the genius and to mend the heart,' that alone adorns the possessor, exalts the species, interests the public, and commands the respect of such judges as I see before me." The grand bow.

"Ah!" said Mr. Williams, hesitatingly, "sentiments that do honor to your head and heart; and if we could, in the first instance, just see the dog privately."

"Nothing easier!" said the Comedian. "Will you do me the honor to meet him at tea this evening?"

"Rather will you not come and take tea at my house?" said the Mayor, with a shy glance towards Mr. Williams.

THE COMEDIAN.—"You are very kind; but my time is so occupied that I have long since made it a rule to decline all private invitations out of my own home. At my years, Mr. Mayor, one may be excused for taking leave of society and its forms; but you are comparitively young men. I presume on the authority of these grey hairs, and I shall expect you this evening—say at nine o'clock." The Actor waved his hand graciously and withdrew.

"A scholar AND a gentleman," said Williams, emphatically. And the Mayor, thus authorized to allow vent to his kindly heart, added, "A humorist, and a pleasant one. Perhaps he is right, and our poor operatives would thank us more for a little innocent amusement than for those lectures, which they may be excused for thinking rather dull, since even you fell asleep when Professor Long got into the multilocular shell of the very first class of cephalous mollusca; and it is my belief that harmless laughter has a good moral effect upon the working class—only don't spread it about that I said so, for we know excellent persons of a serious turn of mind whose opinions that sentiment might shock."

CHAPTER XI.

HISTORICAL PROBLEM: "Is Gentleman Waife a swindler or a man of genius?" ANSWER—"Certainly a swindler, if he don't succeed." Julius Cæsar owed two millions when he risked the experiment of being general in Gaul. If Julius Cæsar had not lived to cross the Rubicon and pay off his debts, what would his creditors have called Julius Cæsar?

I NEED not say that Mr. Hartopp and his foreman came duly to tea, but the Comedian exhibited Sir Isaac's talents very sparingly—just enough to excite admiration without sating curiosity. Sophy, whose pretty face and well-bred air were not unappreciated, was dismissed early to bed by a sign from her grandfather, and the Comedian then exerted his powers to entertain his visitors, so that even Sir Isaac was soon forgotten. Hard task, by writing, to convey a fair idea of this singular vagrant's pleasant vein. It was not so much what he said as the way of saying it, which gave to his desultory talk the charm of humor. He had certainly seen an immense deal of life somehow or other; and without appearing at the time to profit much by observation, without perhaps being himself conscious that he did profit, there was something in the very *enfantillage* of his loosest prattle, by which, with a glance of the one lustrous eye, and a twist of the mobile lip, he could convey the impression of an original genius playing with this round world of ours—tossing it up, catching it again—easily as a child plays with its particoloured ball. His mere book-knowledge was not much to boast of, though early in life he must have received a fair education.

He had a smattering of the ancient classics, sufficient, perhaps, to startle the unlearned. If he had not read them, he had read about them; and at various odds and ends of his life he had picked up acquaintance with the popular standard modern writers. But literature with him was the smallest stripe in the particolored ball. Still it was astonishing how far and wide the Comedian could spread the sands of lore that the winds had drifted round the door of his playful busy intellect. Where, for instance, could he ever have studied the nature and prospects of Mechanics' Institutes? and yet how well he seemed to understand them. Here, perhaps, his experience in one kind of audience helped him to the key to all miscellaneous assemblages. In fine, the man

was an Actor; and if he had thought fit to act the part of Professor Long himself, he would have done it to the life.

The two burghers had not spent so pleasant an evening for many years. As the clock struck twelve, the Mayor, whose gig had been in waiting a whole hour to take him to his villa, rose reluctantly to depart.

"And," said Williams, "the bills must be out to-morrow. What shall we advertise?"

"The simpler the better," said Waife; "only pray head the performance with the assurance that it is under the special patronage of his worship the Mayor."

The Mayor felt his breast swell as if he had received some overwhelming personal obligation.

"Suppose it run thus," continued the Comedian—

"Illustrations from Domestic Life and Natural History, with LIVE examples: PART 1st—THE DOG!"

"It will take," said the Mayor; "dogs are such popular animals!"

"Yes," said Williams; "and though for that very reason some might think that by the 'live example of a dog' we compromised the dignity of the Institute—still the importance of Natural History—"

"And," added the Comedian, "the sanctifying influences of domestic life—"

"May," concluded Mr. Williams, "carry off whatever may seem to the higher order of minds a too familiar attraction in the—dog!"

"I do not fear the result," said Waife, "provided the audience be sufficiently numerous; for that (which is an indispensable condition to a fair experiment) I issue hand-bills—only where distributed by the Mayor."

"Don't be too sanguine. I distributed bills on behalf of Professor Long, and the audience was not numerous. However, I will do my best. Is there nothing more in which I can be of use to you. Mr. Chapman?"

"Yes, later." Williams took alarm, and approached the Mayor's breast-pocket protectingly. The Comedian withdrew him aside and whispered, "I intend to give the Mayor a little outline of the exhibition, and bring him into it, in order that his fellow-townsmen may signify their regard for him by a cheer; it will please his good heart, and be touching, you'll see—mum!" Williams shook the Comedian by the hand, relieved, affected, and confiding. The visitors departed; and the Comedian lighted his hand-candlestick, whistled to Sir Isaac, and went to bed without one compunctuous thought upon the growth of his bill and the deficit in his pockets. And yet it was true, as Sophy implied, that the Comedian had an honest horror of incurring debt. He generally thought twice before he risked owing even the most trifling bill; and when the bill came in, if it left him penniless, it was paid. And, now, what reckless extravagance! The best apartments! dinner—tea—in the first hotel of the town! half-a-crown to a porter! That lavish mode of life renewed with the dawning sun! not a care for the morrow; and I dare not conjecture how few the shillings in that purse. What aggravation, too, of guilt! Bills incurred without means under a borrowed name! I don't pretend to be a lawyer; but it looks to me very much like swindling. Yet the wretch sleeps. But are we sure that we are not shallow moralists? Do we carry into account the right of genius to draw bills upon the Future? Does not the most prudent general sometimes burn his ships? Does not the most upright merchant sometimes take credit on the chance of his ventures? May not that peaceful slumberer be morally sure that he has that argosy afloat in his own head, which amply justifies his use of the "Saracen's?" If his plan should fail? He will tell you that is impossible!

But if it *should* fail, you say. Listen; there runs a story—(I don't vouch for its truth: I tell it as it was told to me)—there runs a story, that in the late Russian war a certain naval veteran, renowned for professional daring and scientific invention, was examined before some great officials as to the chances of taking Cronstadt. "If you send *me*," said the admiral, "with so many ships of the line, and so many gunboats, Cronstadt of course will be taken." "But," said a prudent lord, "suppose it should not be taken?" "That is impossible—it must be taken!" "Yes," persisted my lord, "you think so, no doubt; but still, if it should not be taken—what then?" "What then!—why, there's an end of the British fleet!" The great men took alarm, and that admiral was not sent. But they misconstrued the meaning of his answer. He meant not to imply any considerable danger to the

British fleet. He meant to prove that one hypothesis was impossible by the suggestion of a counter impossibility more self-evident. "It is impossible but what I shall take Cronstadt!" "But if you don't take it?" "It is impossible but what I shall take; for if I don't take it, there's an end of the British fleet; and as it is impossible that there should be an end of the British fleet, it is impossible that I should not take Cronstadt!"—Q.E.D.

CHAPTER XII.

In which everything depends on Sir Isaac's success in discovering the Law of Attraction.

On the appointed evening, at eight o'clock, the great room of the Gatesboro' Athenæum was unusually well filled. Not only had the Mayor exerted himself to the utmost for that object, but the handbill itself promised a rare relief from the prosiness of abstract enlightenment and elevated knowledge. Moreover, the stranger himself had begun to excite speculation and curiosity. He was an amateur, not a cut-and-dry professor. The Mayor and Mr. Williams had both spread the report that there was more in him than appeared on the surface; prodigiously learned, but extremely agreeable—fine manners, too!—Who could he be? Was Chapman his real name? etc., etc.

The Comedian had obtained permission to arrange the room beforehand. He had the raised portion of it for his stage, and he had been fortunate enough to find a green curtain to be drawn across it. From behind this screen he now emerged and bowed. The bow redoubled the first conventional applause. He then began a very short address—extremely well delivered, as you may suppose, but rather in the conversational than the oratorical style. He said it was his object to exhibit the intelligence of that Universal Friend of Man—the Dog, in some manner appropriate, not only to its sagacious instincts, but to its affectionate nature, and to convey thereby the moral that talents, however great, learning, however deep, were of no avail, unless rendered serviceable to man. (Applause).

He must be pardoned then, if, in order to effect this object, he was compelled to borrow some harmless effects from the stage. In a word, his dog would represent to them the plot of a little drama. And he, though he could not say that he was altogether unaccustomed to public speaking (here a smile, modest, but august as that of some famous parliamentary orator who makes his first appearance at a vestry), still wholly new to its practice in the special part he had undertaken, would rely on their indulgence to efforts aspiring to no other merit than that of aiding the Hero of the Piece in a familiar illustration of those qualities in which Dogs might give a lesson to humanity. Again he bowed, and retired behind the curtain. A pause of three minutes; the curtain drew up. Could that be the same Mr. Chapman whom the spectators beheld before them? Could three minutes suffice to change the sleek, respectable, prosperous-looking gentleman who had just addressed them, into that image of threadbare poverty and hunger-pinched dejection? Little aid from theatrical costume; the clothes seemed the same, only to have grown wondrous aged and rusty. The face, the figure, the man—*these* had undergone a transmutation beyond the art of the mere stage wardrobe, be it ever so amply stored, to effect.

But for the patch over the eye, you could not have recognized Mr. Chapman. There was, indeed, about him, still, an air of dignity; but it was the dignity of woe—a dignity, too, not of an affable civilian, but of some veteran soldier. You could not mistake. Though not in uniform, the melancholy man must have been a warrior! The way the coat was buttoned across the chest, the black stock tightened round the throat, the shoulders thrown back in the disciplined habit of a life, though the head bent forward in the despondency of an eventful crisis;—all spoke the decayed, but not ignoble, hero of a hundred fields.

There was something foreign, too, about the veteran's air. Mr. Chapman had looked so thoroughly English—that tragical and meagre personage looked so unequivocally French. Not a word had the Comedian yet said; and yet all this had the first sight of him conveyed to the audience. There was an amazed murmur, then breathless stillness, the story rapidly unfolded itself, partly by words, much more by look and action. There, sate a soldier who had fought under Napoleon at Ma-

rengo and Austerlitz, gone through the snows of Muscovy, escaped the fires of Waterloo—the Soldier of the Empire!

Wondrous ideal of a wondrous time! and nowhere winning more respect and awe than in that land of the old English foe, in which with slight knowledge of the Beautiful in Art, there is so reverent a sympathy for all that is grand in Man! There sate the soldier, penniless and friendless—there, scarcely seen, reclined his grandchild, weak and slowly dying for the want of food; and all that the soldier possesses wherewith to buy bread for the day, is his cross of the Legion of Honor. It was given to him by the hand of the Emperor—must he pawn or sell it? Out on the pomp of decoration which we have substituted for the voice of passionate nature, on our fallen stage! Scenes so faithful to the shaft of a column—dresses by which an antiquary can define a date to a year! Is delusion there? Is it thus we are snatched from Thebes to Athens? No;—place a really fine actor on a deal board, and for Thebes and Athens you may hang up a blanket! Why, that very cross which the old soldier holds—away from his sight—in that tremulous hand, is but patched up from the foil and cardboard bought at the stationer's shop. You might see it was nothing more, if you tried to see. Did a soul present think of such minute investigation? Not one. In the actor's hand that trumpery, became at once the glorious thing by which Napoleon had planted the sentiment of knightly heroism in the men whom Danton would have launched upon earth ruthless and bestial, as galley-slaves that had burst their chain.

The badge, wrought from foil and cardboard, took life and soul; it begot an interest, inspired a pathos, as much as if it had been made—oh! not of gold and gems, but of flesh and blood. And the simple broken words that the veteran addressed to it! The scenes, the fields, the hopes, the glories it conjured up! And now to be wrenched away—sold to supply Man's humblest, meanest wants—sold—the last symbol of such a past! It was indeed "*propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.*" *He* would have starved rather—but the Child? And then the child rose up and came into play. She would not suffer such a sacrifice—she was not hungry—she was not weak; and when voice failed her, she looked up into that iron face and smiled—nothing but a smile. Out came the pocket-handkerchiefs! The soldier seizes the cross, and turns away. It *shall* be sold! As he opens the door, a dog enters gravely—licks his hand approaches the table, raises itself on its hind-legs, surveys the table dolefully, shakes its head, whines, comes to its master, pulls him by the skirt, looks into his face inquisitively.

What does all this mean? It soon comes out, and very naturally. The dog belonged to an old fellow-soldier, who had gone to the Isle of France to claim his share in the inheritance of a brother who had settled and died there, and who, meanwhile, had confided it to the care of our veteran, who was then in comparatively easy circumstances, since ruined by the failure and fraud of a banker to whom he had intrusted his all; and his small pension, including the yearly sum to which his cross entitled him, had been forestalled and mortgaged to pay the petty debts which, relying on his dividend from the banker, he had innocently incurred. The dog's owner had been gone for months; his return might be daily expected. Meanwhile the dog was at the hearth, but the wolf at the door. Now, this sagacious animal had been taught to perform the duties of messenger and major-domo. At stated intervals he applied to his master for *sous*, and brought back the supplies which the *sous* purchased. He now, as usual, came to the table for the accustomed coin—the last *sou* was gone—the dog's occupation was at an end. But could not the dog be sold? Impossible—it was the property of another—a sacred deposit; one would be as bad as the fraudulent banker if one could apply to one's own necessities the property one holds in trust. These little biographical particulars came out in that sort of bitter and pathetic humor which a study of Shakespeare, or the experience of actual life, had taught the Comedian to be a natural relief to an intense sorrow.

The dog meanwhile aided the narrative by his by-play. Still intent upon the *sous*, he thrust his nose into his master's pockets—he appealed touchingly to the child, and finally put back his head and vented his emotion in a lugubrious and elegical howl. Suddenly there is heard without the sound of a show-man's tin trumpet! Whether the actor had got some obliging person to perform on that instrument,

or whether, as more likely, it was but a trick of ventriloquism, we leave to conjecture. At that note, an idea seemed to seize the dog. He ran first to his master, who was on the threshold about to depart; pulled him back into the centre of the room: next he ran to the child, dragging her towards the same spot, though with great tenderness, and then, uttering a joyous bark, he raised himself on his hind-legs, and, with incomparable solemnity, performed a minute step! The child catches the idea from the dog. "Was he not more worth seeing than the puppet-show in the streets? might not people give money to see him, and the old soldier still keep his cross. To-day there is a public fête in the gardens yonder; that showman must be going thither; why not go too?" What! he the old soldier—he stoop to show off a dog! he! he! The dog looked at him daprecatingly, and stretched himself on the floor—lifeless.

Yes, that is the alternative—shall his child die too, and he be too proud to save her? Ah! and if the cross can be saved also! But pshaw! what did the dog know that people would care to see? Oh, much, much. When the child was alone and sad, it would come and play with her. See those old dominoes! She ranged them on the floor, and the dog leapt up and came to prove his skill. Artfully, then, the Comedian had planned that the dog should make some sad mistakes, alternated by some marvellous surprises. No, he would not do; yes, he would do. The audience took it seriously, and became intensely interested in the dog's success; so sorry for his blunders, so triumphant in his lucky hits. And then the child calmed the hasty irritable old man so sweetly, and corrected the dog so gently, and talked to the animal; told it how much they relied on it, and produced her infant alphabet, and spelt out "Save us." The dog looked at the letters meditatively, and henceforth it was evident that he took more pains. Better and better; he will do, he will do! The child shall not starve, the cross shall not be sold. Down drops the curtain.—End of Act I.

Act II. opens with a dialogue spoken off the stage. Invisible *dramatis personæ*, that subsist, with airy tongues, upon the mimetic art of the Comedian. You understand that there is a vehement dispute going on. The dog must not be admitted into a part of the gardens where a more refined and exclusive section of the company have hired seats, in order to contemplate, without sharing, the rude dances or jostling promenade of the promiscuous merry-makers. Much hubbub, much humor; some persons for the dog, some against him; privilege and decorum here, equality and fraternity there. A Bonapartist colonel sees the cross on the soldier's breast, and, *mille tonnerres*, he settles the point. He pays for three reserved seats—one for the soldier, one for the child and a third for the dog. The veteran enters; the child, not strong enough to have pushed through the crowd, raised on his shoulder, Rolla-like; the dog led by a string. He enters erect and warrior-like; his spirit has been roused by contest; his struggles have been crowned by victory. But (and here the art of the drama and the actor culminated towards the highest point)—but he now at once includes in the list of his *dramatis personæ* the whole of his Gatesboro' audience. *They are* that select company into which he has thus forced his way. As he sees them seated before him, so calm, orderly, and dignified, *mauvaise honte* steals over the breast more accustomed to front the cannon than the battery of ladies' eyes. He places the child in a chair abashed and humbled; he drops into a seat beside her shrinkingly; and the dog, with more self-possession and sense of his own consequence, brushes with his paw some imaginary dust from a third chair, as in the superciliousness of the well-dressed, and then seats himself, and looks round with serene audacity.

The chairs were skilfully placed on one side of the stage, as close as possible to the front row of the audience. The soldier ventures a furtive glance along the lines, and then speaks to his grandchild in whispered, bated breath: "Now they are there, what are they come for? To beg? He can never have the boldness to exhibit an animal for *sous*—impossible; no, no, let them slink back again and sell the cross." And the child whispers courage: bids him look again long the rows; those faces seems very kind. He again lifts his eyes, glances round, and with an extemporaneous tact that completed the illusion to which the audience were already gently lending themselves, made sundry complimentary comments on the differ-

ent faces actually before him, selected most felicitously. The audience, taken by surprise, as some fair female, or kindly burgess, familiar to their associations, was thus pointed out to their applause, became heartily genial in their cheers and laughter. And the Comedian's face, unmoved by such demonstrations—so shy and sad—insinuated its pathos underneath cheer and laugh. You now learned through the child that a dance, on which the company had been supposed to be gazing was concluded, and that they would not be displeased by an interval of some other diversion. Now was the time!

The dog, as if to convey a sense of the prevalent ennui, yawned audibly, patted the child on the shoulder, and looked up in her face. "A game of dominoes," whispered the little girl. The dog gleefully grinned assent. Timidly she stole forth the old dominoes, and ranged them on the ground; on which she slipped from her chair; the dog slipped from his; they began to play. The experiment was launched; the soldier saw that the curiosity of the company was excited—that the show would commence—the *sous* follow; and as if he at least would not openly shame his service and his Emperor, he turned aside, slid his hand to his breast, tore away his cross, and hid it. Scarce a murmured word accompanied the action—the acting said all; and a noble thrill ran through the audience. Oh, sublime art of the mime!

The Mayor sate very near where the child and dog were at play. The Comedian had (as he before implied he would do) discreetly prepared that gentleman for direct and personal appeal. The little girl turned her blue eyes innocently towards Mr. Hartopp, and said, "The dog beats me, sir; will you try what you can do?"

A roar, and universal clapping of hands, amidst which the worthy magistrate stepped on the stage. At the command of its young mistress, the dog made the magistrate a polite bow, and straight to the game went magistrate and dog. From that time the interest became, as it were, personal to all present. "Will you come, sir?" said the child to a young gentleman, who was straining his neck to see how the dominoes were played; "and observe that it is all fair. You too, sir?" to Mr. Williams. The Comedean stood beside the dog, whose movements he directed with undetected skill, while appearing only to fix his eyes on the ground in conscious abasement. Those on the rows from behind now pressed forward; those in advance either came on the stage, or stood up intently contemplating. The Mayor was defeated, the crowd became too thick, and the caresses bestowed on the dog seemed to fatigue him. He rose and retreated to a corner haughtily. "Manners, sir," said the soldier; "It is not for the like of us to be proud; excuse him, ladies and gentlemen."—"He only wishes to please all," said the child deprecatingly. "Say how many would you have round us at a time, so that the rest may not be prevented seeing you?" She spread the multiplication figures before the dog; the dog put his paw on 10. "Astonishing!" said the Mayor.

"Will you choose them yourself, sir?"

The dog nodded, walked leisurely round, keeping one eye towards the one eye of his master, and selected ten persons, amongst whom were the Mayor, Mr. Williams, and three pretty young ladies, who had been induced to ascend the stage. The others were chosen no less judiciously.

The dog was then led artfully on from one accomplishment to another, much within the ordinary range which bounds the instruction of learned animals. He was asked to say how many ladies were on the stage; he spelt three. What were their names? "The Graces." Then he was asked who was the first magistrate in the town. The dog made a bow to the Mayor. "What had made that gentleman first magistrate?" The dog looked to the alphabet, and spelt "Worth." "Were there any persons present more powerful than the Mayor?" The dog bowed to the three young ladies. "What made them more powerful?" The dog spelt "Beauty." When ended the applause these answers received, the dog went through the musket exercise with the soldier's staff; and as soon as he had performed that, he came to the business part of the exhibition, seized the hat which his master had dropped on the ground, and carried it round to each person on the stage. They looked at one another." "He is a poor soldier's dog," said the child, hiding her face. "No, no; a soldier cannot beg," cried the Comedian. The Mayor dropped a coin in the hat; others did the

same or affected to do it. The dog took the hat to his master, who waived him aside. There was a pause. The dog laid the hat softly at the soldier's feet, and looked up to the child beseechingly.

"What," asked she, raising her head proudly—"what secures WORTH and defends BEAUTY?" The dog took up the staff and shouldered it. "And to what can the soldier look for aid when he starves and will not beg?" The dog seemed puzzled—the suspense was awful. "Good heavens," thought the Comedian, "if the brute should break down after all!—and when I took such care that the words should lie undisturbed—right before his nose!" With a deep sigh the veteran started from his despondent attitude, and crept along the floor as if for escape—so broken down, so crestfallen. Every eye was on that heart-broken face and receding figure; and the eye of that heart-broken face was on the dog, and the foot of that receding figure seemed to tremble, recoil, start, as it passed by the alphabetical letters which still lay on the ground as last arranged. "Ah! to what should he look for aid?" repeated the grandchild, clasping her little hands. The dog had now caught the cue, and put his paw first upon "WORTH," and then upon "BEAUTY." "Worth!" cried the ladies—"Beauty!" exclaimed the Mayor. "Wonderful, wonderful!" "Take up the hat," said the child, and turning to the Mayor—"Ah! tell him, sir, that what Worth and Beauty give to Valor in distress is not alms but tribute."

The words were little better than a hack claptrap; but the sweet voice glided through the assembly, and found its way into every heart.

"Is it so?" asked the old soldier, as his hand hoveringly passed above the coins. "Upon my honor it is, sir," said the Mayor, with serious emphasis. The audience thought it the best speech he had ever made in his life, and cheered him till the roof rung again. "Oh! bread, bread, for you, darling!" cried the veteran, bowing his head over the child, and taking out his cross and kissing it with passion; "and the badge of honor still for me!"

While the audience was in the full depth of its emotion, and generous tears in many an eye, Waife seized his moment, dropped the actor, and stepped forth to the front as the man—simple, quiet, earnest man—artless man!

"This is no mimic scene, ladies and gentlemen. It is a tale in real life that stands out before you. I am here to appeal to those hearts that are not vainly open to human sorrows. I plead for what I have represented: True, that the man who needs your aid is not one of that soldiery which devastated Europe. But he has fought in battles as severe, and been left by fortune to as stern a desolation. True, he is not a Frenchman: he is one of a land you will not love less than France,—it is your own. He, too, has a child whom he would save from famine. He, too, has nothing left to sell or to pawn for bread—except—oh, not this gilded badge, see, this is only foil and cardboard—except, I say, the thing itself, of which you respect even so poor a symbol—nothing left to sell or to pawn but Honor! For these I have pleaded this night as a showman; for these less haughty than the Frenchman, I stretch my hands towards you without shame; for these I am a beggar."

He was silent. The dog quietly took up the hat and approached the Mayor again. The Mayor extracted the half-crown he had previously deposited, and dropped into the hat two golden sovereigns. Who does not guess the rest? All crowded forward—youth and age, man and woman. And most ardent of all were those whose life stands most close to vicissitude—most exposed to beggary—most sorely tried in the alternative between bread and honor. Not an Operative there but spared his mite.

CHAPTER XIII.

Omne ignotum pro Magnifico.—Rumor, knowing nothing of his antecedents, exalts Gentleman Waife into Don Magnifico.

THE Comedian and his two coadjutors were followed to the Saracen's Head Inn by a large crowd, but at respectful distance. Though I know few things less pleasing than to have been decoyed and entrapped into an unexpected demand upon one's purse—when one only counted, too, upon an agreeable evening—and hold, therefore, in just abhorrence the circulating plate which sometimes follows a public ora-

tion, homily, or other eloquent appeal to British liberality; yet, I will venture to say, there was not a creature whom the Comedian had surprised into impulsive beneficence, who regretted his action, grudged its cost, or thought he had paid too dear for his entertainment. All had gone through a series of such pleasurable emotions, that all had, as it were, wished a vent for their gratitude—and when the vent was found, it became an additional pleasure. But, strange to say, no one could satisfactorily explain to himself these two questions—for what, and to whom had he given his money? It was not a general conjecture that the exhibitor wanted the money for his own uses.

No, despite the evidence in favor of that idea, a person so respectable, so dignified—addressing them, too, with that noble assurance to which a man who begs for himself is not morally entitled—a person thus characterized must be some high-hearted philanthropist who condescended to display his powers at an institute purely intellectual, perhaps on behalf of an eminent but decayed author, whose name, from the respect due to letters, was delicately concealed. Mr. Williams, considered the hardest head and most practical man in the town, originated and maintained that hypothesis. Probably the stranger was an author himself—a great and affluent author. Had not great and affluent authors—men who are the boast of our time and land—acted, yea, on a common stage, and acted inimitably, too, on behalf of some lettered brother or literary object? Therefore in these guileless minds, with all the pecuniary advantages of extreme penury and forlorn position, the Comedian obtained the respect due to prosperous circumstances and high renown. But there was one universal wish expressed by all who had been present, as they took their way homeward—and that wish was to renew the pleasure they had experienced, even if they paid the same price for it.

Could not the long-closed theatre be re-opened, and the great man be induced by philanthropic motives, and an assured sum raised, by voluntary subscriptions, to gratify the whole town, as he had gratified its selected intellect? Mr. Williams, in a state of charitable shaw, now softest of the soft, like most hard men when once softened, suggested this idea to the Mayor. The Mayor said, evasively, that he would think of it, and that he intended to pay his respects to Mr. Chapman before he returned home, that very night—it was proper. Mr. Williams and many others wished to accompany his worship. But the kind magistrate suggested that Mr. Chapman would be greatly fatigued: that the presence of many might seem more an intrusion than a compliment; that he, the Mayor, had better go alone, and at a somewhat later hour, when Mr. Chapman, though not retired to bed, might have had time for rest and refreshment. This delicate consideration had its weight; and the streets were thin when the Mayor's gig stopped, on its way villa-wards, at the Saracen's Head.

CHAPTER XIV.

It is the interval between our first repinings and our final resignation, in which, both with individuals and communities, is to be found all that makes a History worth telling. Ere yet we yearn for what is out of our reach, we are still in the cradle. When wearied out with our yearnings, Desire again falls asleep—we are on the deathbed.

SOPHY (leaning on her grandfather's arm as they ascend the stair of the Saracen's Head). "But I am so tired, grandy—I'd rather go to bed at once, please!"

GENTLEMAN WAIFE.—"Surely you could take something to eat first—something nice,—Miss Chapman?"—(Whispering close) "We can live in clover now"—a phrase which means (aloud to the landlady, who crossed the landing-place above) "grilled chicken and mushrooms for supper ma'am! Why don't you smile, Sophy! Oh, darling, you are ill!"

"No, no, grandy, dear—only tired—let me go to bed. I shall be better to-morrow—I shall indeed!"

Waife looked fondly into her face, but his spirits were too much exhilarated to allow him to notice the unusual flush upon her cheek, except with admiration of the increased beauty which the heightened color gave to her soft features.

"Well," said he, "you *are* a pretty child!—a very pretty child—and you act wonderfully. You would make a fortune on the stage; but—"

SOPHY (eagerly).—"But—no, no, never!—not the stage!"

WAIFE.—"I don't wish you to go on the stage, as you know. A private exhibition—like the one to-night, for instance—has" (thrusting his hand into his pocket) "much to recommend it."

SOPHY (with a sigh).—"Thank Heaven! that is over now—and you'll not be in want of money for a long, long time! Dear Sir Isaac!"

She began caressing Sir Isaac, who received her attentions with solemn pleasure. They were now in Sophy's room, and Waife, after again pressing the child in vain to take some refreshment, bestowed on her his kiss and blessing, and whistled *Malbrook s'en va-t-en guerre* to Sir Isaac, who, considering that melody an invitation to supper, licked his lips, and stalked forth, rejoicing, but decorous.

Left alone, the child breathed long and hard, pressing her hands to her bosom, and sunk wearily on the foot of the bed. There were no shutters to the window, and the moonlight came in gently, stealing across that part of the wall and floor which the ray of the candle left in shade. The girl raised her eyes slowly towards the window—towards the glimpse of the blue sky, and the slanting lustre of the moon. There is a certain epoch in our childhood, when what is called the romance of sentiment first makes itself vaguely felt. And ever with the dawn of that sentiment, the moon and the stars take a strange and haunting fascination. Few persons in middle life—even though they be genuine poets—feel the peculiar spell in the severe stillness and mournful splendor of starry skies which impresses most of us, even though no poets at all, in that mystic age when Childhood nearly touches upon Youth, and turns an unquiet heart to those marvellous riddles within us and without, which we cease to conjecture when experience has taught us that they have no solution upon this side the grave. Lured by the light, the child rose softly, approached the window, and, resting her upturned face upon both hands, gazed long into the heavens, communing evidently with herself, for her lips moved and murmured indistinctly. Slowly she retired from the casement, and again seated herself at the foot of the bed, disconsolate. And then her thoughts ran somewhat thus, though she might not have shaped them exactly in the same words: "No! I cannot understand it. Why was I contented and happy before I knew *him?* Why did I see no harm, no shame in this way of life—not even on that stage with those people—until *he* said, 'It was what he wished I had never stooped to.' And grandfather says our paths are so different, they cannot cross each other again. There is a path of life, then, which I can never enter—there is a path on which I must always, always walk, always, always, always that path—no escape! Never to come into that other one where there is no disguise, no hiding, no false names—never, never!"—she started impatiently, and with a wild look—"It is killing me!"

Then, terrified by her own impetuosity, she threw herself on the bed, weeping low. Her heart had now gone back to her grandfather; it was smiting her for ingratitude to him. Could there be shame or wrong in what he asked—what he did? And was she to murmur if she aided him to exist? What was the opinion of a stranger boy, compared to the approving, sheltering love of her sole guardian and tried fostering friend? And could people choose their own callings and modes of life? If one road went this way, another that; and they on the one road were borne farther and farther away from those on the other—as that idea came, consolation stopped, and in her noiseless weeping there was a bitterness as of despair. But the tears ended by relieving the grief that caused them. Wearied out of conjecture and complaint, her mind relapsed into the old native, childish submission. With a fervor in which there was self-reproach, she repeated her meek, nightly prayer, that God would bless her dear grandfather, and suffer her to be his comfort and support. Then mechanically she undressed, extinguished the candle, and crept into bed.

The moonlight became bolder and bolder; it advanced up the floors, along the walls; now it floods her very pillow, and seems to her eyes to take a holy loving kindness, holier and more loving as the lids droop beneath it. A vague remembrance of some tale of "Guardian spirits," with which Waife had once charmed her wonder, stirred through her lulling thoughts, linking itself with the presence of that encircling moonlight. There! see the eye-

lids are closed, no tear upon their fringe. See the dimples steal out as the sweet lips are parted. She sleeps, she dreams already! Where and what is the rude world of waking now? Are there *not* guardian spirits? Deride the question if thou wilt, stern man, the reasoning and self reliant—but thou, O fair mother—who hast marked the strange happiness on the face of a child that has wept itself to sleep—what sayest *thou* to the soft tradition, which surely had its origin in the heart of the earliest mother?

CHAPTER XV.

There is no man so friendless but what he can find a friend sincere enough to tell him disagreeable truths.

MEANWHILE the Comedian had made himself and Sir Isaac extremely comfortable. No unabstemious man by habit was Gentleman Waife. He could dine on a crust, and season it with mirth; and as for exciting drinks, there was a childlike innocence in his humor never known to a brain that has been washed in alcohol. But on this special occasion, Waife's heart was made so bounteous by the novel sense of prosperity, that it compelled him to treat himself. He did honor to the grilled chicken to which he had vainly tempted Sophy. He ordered half a pint of port to be mulled into negus. He helped himself with a bow, as if himself were a guest, and nodded each time he took off his glass, as much as to say, "Your health, Mr. Waife!" He even offered a glass of the exhilarating draught to Sir Isaac, who, exceedingly offended, retreated under the sofa, whence he peered forth through his deciduous ringlets, with brows knit in grave rebuke. Nor was it without deliberate caution—a whisker first, and then a paw—that he emerged from his retreat, when a plate, heaped with the remains of the feast, was placed upon the hearth-rug.

The supper over, and the attendant gone, the negus still left, Waife lighted his pipe, and, gazing on Sir Isaac, thus addressed that canine philosopher: "Illustrious member of the Quadrupedal Society of Friends to Man, and, as possessing those abilities for practical life which but few friends to man ever display in his service, promoted to high rank—Commissary-General of the Victualling Department, and Chancellor of the Exchequer—I have the honor to inform you that a vote of thanks in your favor has been proposed in this house, and carried unanimously." Sir Isaac, looking shy, gave another lick to the plate, and wagged his tail. "It is true that thou wert once (shall I say it?) in fault at 'Beauty and Worth,'—thy memory deserted thee; thy peroration was on the verge of a break-down; but 'Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit,' as the Latin grammar philosophically expresseth it. Mortals the wisest, not only on two legs, but even upon four, occasionally stumble. The greatest general, statesman, sage, is not he who commits no blunder, but he who best repairs a blunder, and converts it to success. This was thy merit and distinction! It hath never been mine! I recognize thy superior genius. I place in thee unqualified confidence; and consigning thee to the arms of Morpheus, since I see that panegyric acts on thy nervous system as a salubrious soporific, I now move that this House do resolve itself into a Committee of Ways and Means for the Consideration of the Budget!"

Therewith, while Sir Isaac fell into a profound sleep, the Comedian deliberately emptied his pockets on the table; and arranging gold and silver before him, thrice carefully counted the total, and then divided it into sundry small heaps.

"That's for the bill," quoth he—"Civil List!—a large item. That's for Sophy, the darling! She shall have a teacher, and learn Music—Education Grant—Current expenses for the next fortnight;—Miscellaneous Estimates;—tobacco—we'll call that Secret-Service Money. Ah, scamp—vagrant, is not Heaven kind to thee at last! A few more such nights, and who knows but thine old age may have other roof than the workhouse? And Sophy?—Ah, what of her! Merciful Providence, spare my life till she has outgrown its uses!" A tear came to his eye; he brushed it away quickly, and recounting his money, hummed a joyous tune.

The door opened; Waife looked up in surprise, sweeping his hand over the coins, and restoring them to his pocket.

The Mayor entered.

As Mr. Hartopp walked slowly up the room, his eye fixed Waife's; and that eye was so

searching, though so mild, that the Comedian felt himself change color. His gay spirits fell —falling lower and lower, the nearer the Mayor's step came to him; and when Hartopp, without speaking, took his hand—not in compliment—not in congratulation, but pressed it as if in deep compassion, still looking him full in the face, with those pitying, penetrating eyes, the Actor experienced a sort of shock as if he were read through, despite all his histrionic disguises—read through to his heart's core; and, as silent as his visitor, sunk back on his chair—abashed—disconcerted.

MR. HARTOPP.—"Poor man!"

THE COMEDIAN (rousing himself with an effort, but still confused).—"Down, Sir Isaac, down! This visit, Mr. Mayor, is an honor which may well take a dog by surprise! Forgive him!"

MR. HARTOPP (patting Sir Isaac, who was inquisitively sniffing his garments, and drawing a chair close to the Actor, who thereon edged his own chair a little away—in vain; for, on that movement, Mr. Hartopp advanced in proportion).—"Your dog is a very admirable and clever animal; but in the exhibition of a learned dog, there is something which tends to sadden one. By what privations has he been forced out of his natural ways? By what fastings and severe usage have his instincts been distorted into tricks? Hunger is a stern teacher, Mr. Chapman; and to those whom it teaches, we cannot always give praise unmixed with pity."

THE COMEDIAN (ill at ease under this allegorical tone, and surprised at a quicker intelligence in Mr. Hartopp than he had given that person credit for).—"You speak like an oracle, Mr. Mayor; but that dog, at least, has been mildly educated, and kindly used. Inborn genius, sir, will have its vent. Hum! a most intelligent audience honored us to-night; and our best thanks are due to you."

MR. HARTOPP.—"Mr. Chapman, let us be frank with each other. I am not a clever man —perhaps a dull one. If I had set up for a clever man, I should not be where I am now. Hush! no compliments. But my life has brought me into frequent contact with those who suffer; and the dullest of us gain a certain sharpness in the matters to which our observation is habitually drawn. You took me in at first, it is true. I thought you were a philanthropical humorist, who might have crotchets, as many benevolent men, with time on their hands and money in their pockets, are apt to form. But when it came to the begging hat (I ask your pardon—don't let me offend you)—when it came to the begging hat, I recognized the man who wants philanthropy from others, and whose crotchets are to be regarded in a professional point of view. Sir, I have come here alone, because I alone perhaps see the case as it really is. Will you confide in me? you may do it safely. To be plain, who and what are you?"

THE COMEDIAN (evasively).—"What do you take me for, Mr. Mayor? What can I be other than an itinerant showman, who has had resort to a harmless stratagem in order to obtain an audience, and create a surprise that might cover the naked audacity of the 'begging hat!'"

MR. HARTOPP (gravely).—"When a man of your ability and education is reduced to such stratagems, he must have committed some great faults. Pray Heaven it be no no worse than faults!"

THE COMEDIAN (bitterly).—"That is always the way with the prosperous. Is a man unfortunate—they say, 'Why don't he help himself?' Does he try to help himself—they say, 'With so much ability, why does not he help himself better?' Ability and education! Snares and springes, Mr. Mayor! Ability and education! the two worst man-traps that a poor fellow can put his foot into! Aha! Did not you say, if you had set up to be clever, you would not be where you now are? A wise saying; I admire you for it. Well, well, I and my dog have amused your townsfolk; they have amply repaid us. We are public servants; according as we act in public—hiss us or applaud. Are we to submit to an inquisition into our private character? Are you to ask how many mutton bones has that dog stolen! how many cats has he worried! or how many shirts has the showman in his wallet! how many debts has he left behind him! what is his rent-roll on earth, and his account with heaven!—go and put those questions to ministers, philosophers, generals, poets. When they have acknowledged your right to put them, come to me and the other dog!"

MR. HARTOPP (rising and drawing on his gloves).—"I beg your pardon! I have done.

sir. And yet I conceived an interest in you. It is because I have no talents myself that I admire those who have. I felt a mournful anxiety, too, for your poor little girl — so young, so engaging. And is it necessary that you should bring up that child in a course of life certainly equivocal, and to females dangerous?"

The Comedian lifted his eyes suddenly, and stared hard at the face of his visitor, and in that face there was so much of benevolent humanity—so much sweetness contending with authoritative rebuke — that the vagabond's hardihood gave way! he struck his breast, and groaned aloud.

MR. HARTOPP (pressing on the advantage he had gained).—"And have you no alarm for her health? Do you not see how delicate she is? Do you not see that her very talent comes from her susceptibility to emotions, which must wear her away?"

WAIFE.—"No, no! stop, stop, stop! you terrify me, you break my heart. Man, man! it is all for her that I toil, and show, and beg —if you call it begging. Do you think I care what becomes of this battered hulk? Not a straw. What am I to do? What! what! You tell me to confide in you—wherefore? How can you help me? Who can help me? Would you give me employment? What am I fit for? Nothing! You could find work and bread for an Irish laborer, nor ask who or what he was; but to a man who strays towards you, seemingly from that sphere in which, if Poverty enters, she drops a curtsy and is called 'genteel,' you cry. Hold, produce your passport; where are your credentials —references?' I have none. I have slipped out of the world I once moved in. I can no more appeal to those I knew in it than if I had transmigrated from one of yon stars, and said, 'See *there* what I was once!' Oh, but you do not think she looks ill!—do you? do you? Wretch that I am! And I thonght to save her!"

The old man trembled from head to foot, and his cheek was as pale as ashes.

Again the good magistrate took his hand, but this time the clasp was encouraging. "Cheer up; where there is a will there is a way; you justify the opinion I formed in your favor, despite all circumstances to the contrary. When I asked you to confide in me, it was not from curiosity, but because I would serve you, if I can. Reflect on what I have said. True, you can know but little of me. Learn what is said of me by my neighbors before you trust me further. For the rest, tomorrow you will have many proposals to renew your performance. Excuse me if I do not actively encourage it. I will not, at least, interfere to your detriment; but—"

"But," exclaimed Waife, not much heeding this address—"but you think she looks ill? you think this is injuring her? you think I am murdering my grandchild—my angel of life, my all?"

"Not so; I spoke too bluntly. Yet still—"

"Yes, yes, yet still—"

"Still, if you love her so dearly, would you blunt her conscience and love of truth? Were you not an impostor to-night? Would you ask her to reverence, and imitate, and pray for an impostor?"

"I never saw it in that light!" faltered Waife, struck to the soul; "never, never, so help me Heaven!"

"I felt sure you did not," said the Mayor; "you saw but the sport of the thing; you took to it as a school-boy. I have known many such men, with high animal spirits like yours. Such men err thoughtlessly; but did they ever sin consciously, they could not keep those high spirits! Good-night, Mr. Chapman, I shall hear from you again."

The door closed on the form of the visitor: Waife's head sunk on his breast, and all the deep lines upon brow and cheek stood forth, records of mighty griefs revived—a countenance so altered, now its innocent arch play was gone, that you would not have known it. At length he rose very quietly, took up the candle, and stole into Sophy's room. Shading the light with careful hand, he looked on her face as she slept. The smile was still upon the parted lip—the child was still in the fairy land of dreams. But the cheek was thinner than it had been weeks ago, and the little hand that rested on the coverlid seemed wasted. Waife took that hand noiselessly into his own! it was hot and dry.

He dropped it with a look of unutterable fear and anguish, and shaking his head piteously, stole back again. Seating himself by the table at which he had been caught counting his gains, he folded his arms, and rooted

his gaze on the floor; and there, motionless, and as if in stupefied suspense of thought itself, he sate till the dawn crept over the sky—till the sun shone into the windows. The dog, crouched at his feet, sometimes started up and whined as to attract his notice: he did not heed it. The clock struck six, the house began to stir. The chambermaid came into the room; Waife rose and took his hat, brushing its nap mechanically with his sleeve. "Who did you say was the best here?" he asked with a vacant smile, touching the chambermaid's arm.

"Sir! the best—what!"

"The best doctor, ma'am—none of your parish apothecaries—the best physician—Dr. Gill—did you say Gill? Thank you; his address, High Street. Close by, ma'am." With his grand bow—such is habit!—Gentleman Waife smiled graciously, and left the room. Sir Isaac stretched himself and followed.

CHAPTER XVI.

In every civilized society there is found a race of men who retain the instincts of the aboriginal cannibal, and live upon their fellow-men as a natural food. These interesting but formidable bipeds, having caught their victim, invariably select one part of his body on which to fasten their relentless grinders. The part thus selected is peculiarly susceptible, Providence having made it alive to the least nibble; it is situated just above the hip-joint, it is protected by a tegument of exquisite fibre vulgarly called "THE BREECHES POCKET." The thoroughbred Anthropophagite usually begins with his own relations and friends; and so long as he confines his voracity to the domestic circle, the Laws interfere little, if at all, with his venerable propensities. But when he has exhausted all that allows itself to be edible in the bosom of private life, the Man-eater falls loose on Society, and takes to prowling—then "*Sauve qui peut!*" the Laws rouse themselves, put on their spectacles, call for their wigs and gowns, and the Anthropophagite turned prowler is not always sure of his dinner. It is when he has arrived at this stage of development that the man-eater becomes of importance, enters into the domain of History, and occupies the thoughts of Moralists."

On the same morning in which Waife thus went forth form the "Saracen's Head" in quest of the doctor, but at a later hour, a man, who, to judge by the elaborate smartness of his attire, and the jaunty assurance of his saunter, must have wandered from the gay purlieus of Regent Street, threaded his way along the silent and desolate thoroughfares that intersect the remotest districts of Bloomsbury. He stopped at the turn into a small street still more sequestered than those which led to it, and looked up to the angle on the wall whereon the name of the street should have been inscribed. But the wall had been lately whitewashed, and the whitewash had obliterated the expected epigraph. The man muttered an impatient execration; and turning round as if to seek a passenger of whom to make inquiry, beheld on the opposite side of the way another man apparently engaged in the same research. Involuntarily each crossed over the road towards the other.

"Pray, sir," qouth the second wayfarer in that desert, "can you tell me if this is a street that is called a Place—Podden Place, Upper?"

"Sir," returned the sprucer wayfarer, "it is the question I would have asked of you."

"Strange!"

"Very strange indeed that more than one person can, in this busy age, employ himself in discovering a Podden Place! Not a soul to enquire of—not a shop that I see—not an orange-stall!"

"Ha!" cried the other, in a hoarse sepulchral voice—"Ha! there is a pot-boy! Boy—boy—boy! I say; Hold, there! hold! Is this Podden Place—Upper?"

"Yes, it be," answered the pot-boy, with a sleepy air, caught in that sleepy atmosphere; and chimiug his pewter againt an area rail with a dull clang, he chanted forth "Pots oho!" with a note as dirge-like as that which in the City of the Plague chanted "Out with the dead!"

Meanwhile the two wayfarers exchanged bows and parted—the sprucer wayfarer, whether from the indulgence of a reflective mood, or from an habitual indifference to things and persons not concerning him, ceased to notice his fellow-solitary, and rather busied himself in sundry litttle coquetries appertaining to his own person. He passed his hand through his hair, re-arranged the cock of his hat, looked complacently at his boots, which still retained the gloss of the morning's varnish, drew down his wristbands, and, in a word, gave sign of a man who desires to make an effect, and feels that he ought to do it. So occupied was he in this self-commune, that when he stopped at length at one of the small

doors in the small street, and lifted his hand to the knocker, he started to see that Wayfarer the Second was by his side.

The two men now examined each other briefly but deliberately. Wayfarer the First was still young—certainly handsome, but with an indescribable look about the eye and lip, from which the other recoiled with an instinctive awe—a hard look, a cynical look—a sidelong, quiet, defying, remorseless look. His clothes were so new of gloss that they seemed put on for the first time, were shaped to the prevailing fashion, and of a taste for colors less subdued than is usual with Englishmen, yet still such as a person of good mien could wear without incurring the charge of vulgarity, though liable to that of self-conceit. If you doubted that the man were a gentleman, you would have been puzzled to guess what else he could be. Were it not for the look we have mentioned, and which was perhaps not habitual, his appearance might have been called prepossessing. In his figure there was the grace, in his step the elasticity, which come from just proportions and muscular strength. In his hand he carried a supple switch-stick, slight and innocuous to appearance, but weighted at the handle after the fashion of a life-preserver.

The tone of his voice was not displeasing to the ear, though there might be something artificial in the swell of it—the sort of tone men assume when they desire to seem more frank and offhand than belongs to their nature—a sort of rollicking tone which is to the voice what swagger is to the gait. Still that look!—it produced on you the effect which might be created by some strange animal, not without beauty, but deadly to man. Wayfarer the Second was big and burly, middle-aged, large-whiskered, his complexion dirty. He wore a wig,—a wig evident, unmistakable—a wig curled and rusty—over the wig a dingy white hat. His black stock fitted tight round his throat, and across his breast he had thrown the folds of a Scotch plaid.

WAYFARER THE FIRST.—"You call here, too—on Mrs. Crane?"

WAYFARER THE SECOND.—"Mrs. Crane?—you too? Strange!"

WAYFARER THE FIRST (with constrained civility).—"Sir, I call on business—private business."

WAYFARER THE SECOND (with candid surliness).—"So do I."

WAYFARER THE FIRST.—"Oh!"

WAYFARER THE SECOND.—"Ha! the locks unbar!"

The door opened, and an old meagre woman-servant presented herself.

WAYFARER THE FIRST (gliding before the big man with a serpent's undulating celerity of movement).—"Mrs. Crane lives here?"—"Yes!" "She's at home, I suppose?"—"Yes!" "Take up my card; say I come alone—not with this gentleman."

Wayfarer the Second seems to have been rather put out by the manner of his rival. He recedes a step.

"You know the lady of this mansion well, sir?"

"Extremely well."

"Ha! then I yield you the precedence; I yield it, sir, but conditionally. You will not be long?"

"Not a moment longer than I can help; the land will be clear for you in an hour or less."

"Or less, so please you, let it be or less. Servant, sir."

"Sir, yours—Come, my Hebe; track the dancers, that is, go up the stairs, and let me renew the dreams of youth in the eyes of Bella?"

The old woman, meanwhile, had been turning over the card in her withered palm, looking from the card to the visitor's face, and then to the card again, and mumbling to herself. At length she spoke:

"You, Mr. Losely—you!—Jasper Losely! how you be changed! what ha' ye done to yourself? where's your comeliness? where's the look that stole ladies' hearts?—you, Jasper Losely! you are his goblin!"

"Hold your peace, old hussey!" said the visitor, evidently annoyed at remarks so disparaging. "I am Jaspar Losely, more bronzed of cheek, more iron of hand." He raised his switch with a threatening gesture, that might be in play, for the lips wore smiles, or might be in earnest, for the brows were bent; and pushing into the passage, and shutting the door, said—"Is your mistress upstairs? show me to her room, or—" The old crone gave him one angry glance, which sunk frightened beneath the cruel gleam of his eyes, and hastening up the stairs with a quicker

stride than her age seemed to warrant, cried out—"Mistress, mistress! here is Mr. Losely! —Jasper Losely himself!" By the time the visitor had reached the landing-place of the first floor, a female form had emerged from a room above;—a female face peered over the banisters. Losely looked up, and started as he saw it. A haggard face—the face of one over whose life there has passed a blight.

When last seen by him it had possessed beauty, though of a masculine rather than womanly character. Now of that beauty not a trace! the cheeks, sunk and hollow, left the nose sharp, long, beaked as a bird of prey. The hair, once glossy in its ebon hue, now grizzled, harsh, neglected, hung in tortured tangled meshes—a study for an artist who would paint a fury. But the eyes were bright —brighter than ever; bright now with a glare that lighted up the whole face bending over the man. In those burning eyes was there love? was there hate? was there welcome? was there menace? Impossible to distinguish; but at least one might perceive that there was joy.

"So," said the voice from above—"so we do meet at last, Jasper Losely; you are come!"

Drawing a loose kind of dressing-robe more closely round her, the mistress of the house now descended the stairs—rapidly, flittingly, with a step noiseless as a spectre's, and, grasping Losely firmly by the hand, led him into a chill, dark, sunless drawing-room, gazing into his face fixedly all the while.

He winced and writhed. "There, there, let us sit down, my dear Mrs. Crane."

"And once I was called Bella."

"Ages ago! *Batsa!* All things have their end. Do take those eyes of yours off my face; they were always so bright!—and—really now they are perfect burning-glasses! How close it is! Peuh! I am dead tired. May I ask for a glass of water—a drop of wine in it—or —brandy will do as well?"

"Ho! you have come to brandy and morning drams—eh, Jasper!" said Mrs. Crane, with a strange dreary accent. "I too once tried if fire could burn up thought, but it did not succeed with me; that is years ago;—and —there—see the bottles are full still!"

While thus speaking, she had unlocked a chiffonier of the shape usually found in "genteel lodgings," and taken out a leathern spirit-case containing four bottles, with a couple of wine-glasses. This case she placed on the table before Mr. Losely, and contemplated him at leisure while he helped himself to the raw spirits.

As she thus stood, an acute student of Lavater might have recognized, in her harsh and wasted countenance, signs of an original nature superior to that of her visitor; on her knitted brow, a sense higher in quality than on his smooth low forehead; on her straight stern lip, less cause for distrust than in the false good-humor which curved his handsome mouth into that smile of the fickle, which, responding to mirth but not to affection, is often lighted and never warmed. It is true that in that set pressure of her lip there might be cruelty, and, still more, the secretiveness which can harbor deceit; and yet, by the nervous workings of that lip, when relieved from such pressure, you would judge the woman to be rather by natural temperament passionate and impulsive than systematically cruel or deliberately false —false or cruel only as some predominating passion became the soul's absolute tyrant, and adopted the tyrant's vices. Above all, in those very lines destructive to beauty that had been ploughed, not by time, over her sallow cheeks, there was written the susceptibility to grief, to shame, to the sense of fall, which was not visible in the unreflective reckless aspect of the sleek human animal before her.

In the room, too, there were some evidences of a cultivated taste. On the walls, bookshelves, containing volumes of a decorous and severe literature, such as careful parents allow to studious daughters—the stately masterpieces of Fénélon and Racine—selections, approved by boarding-schools from Tasso, Dante, Metastasio;—amongst English authors, Addison, Johnson, Blair (his lectures as well as sermons)—elementary works on such sciences as admit female neophytes into their porticoes, if not into their penetralia—botany, chemistry, astronomy. Prim as soldiers on parade stood the books—not a gap in their ranks—evidently never now displaced for recreation—well bound, yet faded, dusty;—relics of a bygone life. Some of them might perhaps have been prizes at school, or birthday gifts from proud relations. There, too, on the table, near the spirit-case, lay open a once

handsome workbox—no silks now on the skeleton reels—discolored, but not by use, in its nest of tarnished silk slept the golden thimble. There, too, in the corner, near a music-stand piled high with musical compositions of various schools and graduated complexity, from "lessons for beginners" to the most arduous gamut of a German oratorio, slunk pathetically a poor lute-harp, the strings long since broken. There, too, by the window, hung a wire bird-cage, the bird long since dead. In a word, round the woman gazing on Jasper Losely, as he complacently drank his brandy, grouped the forlorn tokens of an early state—the lost golden age of happy girlish studies, of harmless girlish tastes.

"*Basta*—eno'," said Mr. Losely, pushing aside the glass which he had twice filled and twice drained—"to business. Let me see the child—I feel up to it now."

A darker shade fell over Arabella Crane's face, as she said—

"The child—she is not here! I have disposed of her long ago."

"Eh!—disposed of her! what do you mean?"

"Do you ask as if you feared I had put her out of the world? No! Well, then—you come to England to see the child? You miss—you love, the child of that—of that—" She paused, checked herself, and added in an altered voice—"of that honest, high-minded gentlewoman, whose memory must be so dear to me—you love that child; very natural Jasper."

"Love her! a child I have scarcely seen since she was born!—do talk common sense. No. But have I told you that she ought to be money's worth to me—ay, and she shall be yet, despite that proud man's disdainful insolence."

"That proud man—what, you have ventured to address him—visit him—since your return to England?"

"Of course. That's what brought be over. I imagined the man would rejoice at what I told him—open his purse-strings—lavish blessings and bank notes. And the brute would not even believe me—all because——"

"Because you had sold the right to be believed before. I told you, when I took the child, that you would never succeed there—that I would never encourage you in the attempt. But you had sold the future as you sold your past—too cheaply, it seems Jasper."

"Too cheaply, indeed. Who could ever have supposed that I should have been fobbed off with such a pittance?"

"Who, indeed, Jasper! You were made to spend fortunes, and call them pittances when spent, Jasper! You should have been a prince, Jasper—such princely tastes! Trinkets and dress, horses aud dice, and plenty of ladies to look and die. Such princely spirit too!—bounding all return for loyal sacrifice to the honor you vouchsafed in accepting it!"

Uttering this embittered irony, which nevertheless seemed rather to please than to offend her guest, she kept moving about the room, and (whether from some drawer in the furniture, or from her own person, Losely's careless eye did not observe) she suddenly drew forth a miniature, and, placing it before him, exclaimed—"Ah, but you are altered from those days—see what you then were!"

Losely's gaze, thus abruptly invited, fixed itself on the effigies of a youth eminently handsome, and of that kind of beauty which, without being effeminate, approaches to the fineness and brilliancy of the female countenance—a beauty which renders its possessor inconveniently conspicuous, and too often. by winning that ready admiration which it costs no effort to obtain, withdraws the desire of applause from successes to be achieved by labor, and hardens egotism by the excuses it lends to self-esteem. It is true that this handsome face had not the elevation bestowed by thoughtful expression; but thoughtful expression is not the attribute a painter seeks to give to the abstract comeliness of early youth—and it is seldom to be acquired without that constitutional wear and tear which is injurious to mere physical beauty.

And over the whole countenance was diffused a sunny light, the freshness of buxom health, of luxuriant vigor, so that even that arrogant vanity which an acute observer might have detected as the prevailing mental characteristic, seemed but a glad exultation in the gifts of benignant nature. Not there the look which, in the matured man gazing on the bright ghost of his former self, might have daunted the timid and warned the wise. "And I was like this! True! I remember well when it was taken, and no one called it flattering,"

said Mr. Losely, with pathetic self-condolence. "But I can't be very much changed," he added, with a half-laugh. "At my age one may have a manlier look, yet——"

"Yet still be handsome, Jasper," said Mrs. Crane. "You are so. But look at me—what am I?"

"Oh, a very fine woman, my dear Crane—always were. But you neglect yourself; you should not do that; keep it up to the last. Well, but to return to the child. You have disposed of her without my consent, without letting me know."

"Letting you know! How many years is it since you even gave me your address? Never fear, she is in good hands."

"Whose? At all events I must see her."

"See her! What for?"

"What for! Hang it, it is natural that, now I am in England, I should at least wish to know what she is like. And I think it very strange that you should send her away, and then make all these difficulties. What's your object? I don't understand it."

"My object? What could be object but to serve you? At your request I took, fed, reared a child, whom you could not expect me to love, at my own cost, Did I ever ask you for a shilling? Did I ever suffer you to give me one? Never! At last, hearing no more *from* you, and what little I heard *of* you making me think that, if anything happened to me (and I was very ill at the time), you could only find her a burthen—at last, I say, the old man came to me—you had given him my address—and he offered to take her, and I consented. She is with him."

"The old man! She is with him! And where is he?"

"I don't know."

"Humph; how does he live? Can he have got any money?"

"I don't know."

"Did any old friends take him up?"

"Would he go to old friends?"

Mr. Losely tossed off two fresh glasses of brandy, one after the other, and, rising, walked to and fro the room, his hands buried in his pockets, and in no comfortable vein of reflection. At length he paused and said, "Well, upon the whole, I don't see what I could do with the girl just at present, though of course, I ought to know where she is, and with whom. Tell me, Mrs. Crane, what is she like—pretty or plain?"

"I suppose the chit would be called pretty—by some persons at least."

"*Very* pretty? handsome?" asked Losely, abruptly.

"Handsome or not, what does it signify? what good comes of beauty? You had beauty enough; what have you done with it?"

At that question, Losely drew himself up with a sudden loftiness of look and gesture, which, though prompted but by offended vanity, improved the expression of the countenance, and restored to it much of its earlier character. Mrs. Crane gazed on him, startled into admiration, and it was in an altered voice, half reproachful, half bitter, that she continued—

"And now that you are satisfied about her, have you no questions to ask about me—what I do—how I live?"

"My dear Mrs. Crane, I know that you are comfortably off, and were never of a mercenary temper. I trust you are happy, and so forth—I wish I were; things don't prosper with me. If you could conveniently lend me a five-pound note—"

"You would borrow of me, Jasper? Ah! you come to me in your troubles. You shall have the money—five pounds—ten pounds—what you please, but you will call again for it—you need me now—you will not utterly desert me now?"

"Best of creatures!—never!" He seized her hand and kissed it. She withdrew it quickly from his clasp, and, glancing over him from head to foot, said, "But are you really in want?—you are well dressed, Jasper; that you always were."

"Not always; three days ago very much the reverse; but I have had a trifling aid, and—"

"Aid in England? from whom? where? Not from him whom, you say, you had the courage to seek?"

"From whom else? Have I no claim? A miserable alms flung to me. Curse him! I tell you that man's look and language so galled me—so galled," echoed Losely, shifting his hold from the top of his switch to the centre, and bringing the murderous weight of the lead down on the palm of his other hand, "that, if his eye had quitted mine for a moment, I think I must have brained him, and been—"

"Hanged!" said Mrs. Crane.

"Of course, hanged," returned Losely, resuming the reckless voice and manner in which there was that peculiar levity which comes from hardness of heart, as from the steel's hardness comes the blade's play. "But if a man did not sometimes forget consequences, there would be an end of the gallows. I am glad that his eye never left mine." And the leaden head of the switch fell with a dull dumb sound on the floor.

Mrs. Crane made no immediate rejoinder, but fixed on her lawless visitor a gaze in which there was no womanly fear (though Losely's aspect and gesture might have sent a thrill through the nerves of many a hardy man), but which was not without womanly compassion, her countenance gradually softening more and more, as if under the influence of recollections mournful but not hostile. At length she said in a low voice, "Poor Jasper! Is all the vain ambition that made you so false shrunk into a ferocity that finds you so powerless? Would your existence, after all, have been harder, poorer, meaner, if your faith had been kept to me?"

Evidently disliking that turn in the conversation, but checking a reply which might have been rude had no visions of five pounds—ten pounds—loomed in the distance, Mr. Losely said, "Pshaw! Bella, pshaw! I was a fool, I daresay, and a sad dog—a very sad dog; but I had always the greatest regard for you, and always shall! Hillo, what's that? A knock at the door! Oh, by the by, a queer-looking man, in a white hat, called at the same time I did, to see you on private business—gave way to me—said he should come again; may I ask who he is?"

"I cannot guess; no one ever calls here on business except the tax-gatherer."

The old woman-servant now entered. "A gentleman, ma'am—says his name is Rugge."

"Rugge—Rugge—let me think."

"I am here, Mrs. Crane," said the manager, striding in. "You don't perhaps call me to mind by name; but—oho—not gone, sir! Do I intrude prematurely?"

"No, I have done; good-day, my dear Mrs. Crane."

"Stay, Jasper. I remember you now, Mr. Rugge; take a chair."

She whispered a few words into Losely's ear, then turned to the manager, and said aloud, "I saw you at Mr. Waife's lodging, at the time he had that bad accident."

"And I had the honor to accompany you home, ma'am, and—but shall I speak out before this gentleman?"

"Certainly; you see he is listening to you with attention. This gentleman and I have no secrets from each other. What has become of that person? This gentleman wishes to know."

LOSELY.—"Yes, sir, I wish to know—particularly."

"RUGGE—"So do I; that is partly what I came about. You are aware, I think, ma'am, that I engaged him and Juliet Araminta, that is, Sophy."

LOSELY.—"Sophy—engaged them, sir—how?"

RUGGE.—"Theatrical line, sir—Rugge's exhibition; he was a great actor once, that fellow Waife."

LOSELY.—"Oh, actor!—well, sir, go on."

RUGGE (who in the course of his address turns from the lady to the gentleman, from the gentleman to the lady, with appropriate gesture and appealing look).—"But he became a wreck, a block of a man; lost an eye and his voice too. However, to serve him, I took his grandchild and him too. He left me—shamefully, and ran off with his grandchild, sir. Now, ma'am, to be plain with you, that little girl I looked upon as my property—a very valuable property. She is worth a great deal to me, and I have been done out of her. If you can help me to get her back, articled and engaged say for three years, I am willing and happy, ma'am, to pay something handsome—uncommon handsome."

MRS. CRANE. (loftily).—"Speak to that gentleman—*he* may treat with you."

LOSELY.—"What do you call uncommon handsome, Mr.—Mr. Tugge?"

RUGGE.—"Rugge! sir; we shan't disagree, I hope, provided you have the power to get Waife to bind the girl to me."

LOSELY.—"I may have the power to transfer the young lady to your care; young lady is a more respectable phrase than girl, and possibly to dispense with Mr. Waife's consent to such arrangement. But excuse me if I say that I must know a little more of yourself, be-

fore I could promise to exert such a power on your behalf."

RUGGE.—"Sir, I shall be proud to improve our acquaintance. As to Waife, the old vagabond, he has injured and affronted me, sir. I don't bear malice, but I have a spirit—Britons have a spirit, sir. And you will remember, ma'am, that when I accompanied you home, I observed that Mr. Waife was a mysterious man, and had apparently known better days, and that when a man is mysterious, and falls into the sere and yellow leaf, ma'am, without that which should accompany old age, sir, one has a right to suspect that some time or other he has done something or other, ma'am, which makes him fear lest the very stones prate of his whereabouts, sir. And you did not deny, ma'am, that the mystery was suspicious, but you said, with uncommon good sense, that it was nothing to me what Mr. Waife had once been, so long as he was of use to me at that particular season. Since then, sir, he has ceased to be of use—ceased, too, in the unhandsomest manner. And if you would, ma'am, from a sense of justice, just unravel the mystery, put me in possession of the secret, it might make that base man of use to me again—give me a handle over him, sir, so that I might awe him into restoring my property, as, morally speaking, Juliet Araminta most undoubtedly is. That's why I call—leaving my company, to which I am a father, orphans for the present. But I have missed that little girl—that young lady, sir. I called her a phenomenon, ma'am—missed her much—it is natural, sir; I appeal to you. No man can be done out of a valuable property and not feel it, if he has a heart in his bosom. And if I had her back safe, I should indulge ambition. I have always had ambition. The theatre at York, sir—that is my ambition; I had it from a child, sir; dreamed of it three times, ma'am. If I had back my property in that phenomenon, I would go at the thing, slap bang, take the York, and bring out the phenomenon, with *a claw!*"

LOSELY (musingly).—"You say the young lady is a phenomenon, and for this phenomenon, you are willing to pay something handsome—a vague expression. Put it into *£. s. d.*"

RUGGE.—"Sir, if she can be bound to me legally for three years, I would give £100. I did offer to Waife £50—to you, sir, £100."

Losely's eyes flashed, and his hands opened restlessly. "But, confound it, where is she? have you no clue?"

RUGGE.—"No, but we can easily find one; it was not worth my while to hunt them up, before I was quite sure that, if I regained my property in that phenomenon, the law would protect it."

MRS. CRANE (moving to the door).—"Well, Jasper Losely, you will sell the young lady, I doubt not; and when you have sold her, let me know." She came back and whispered, "You will not perhaps now want money from me, but I shall see you again; for, if you would find the child, you will need my aid."

"Certainly, my dear friend, I will call again; honor bright."

Mrs. Crane here bowed to the gentlemen, and swept out of the room.

Thus left alone, Losely and Rugge looked at each other with a shy and yet cunning gaze—Rugge's hands in his trousers pockets, his head thrown back—Losely's hands involuntarily expanded, his head bewitchingly bent forward, and a little on one side.

"Sir," said Rugge at length, "what do you say to a chop and a pint of wine? Perhaps we could talk more at our ease elsewhere. I am only in town for a day—left my company thirty miles off—orphans, as I said before."

"Mr. Rugge," said Losely, "I have no desire to stay in London, or indeed in England; and the sooner we can settle this matter the better. Grant that we find the young lady, you provide for her board and lodging—teach her your honorable profession—behave, of course, kindly to her—"

"Like a father."

"And give to me the sum of £100?"

"That is, if you can legally make her over to me. But, sir, may I inquire by what authority you would act in this matter?"

"On that head it will be easy to satisfy you; meanwhile I accept your proposal of an early dinner. Let us adjourn—is it to your house?"

"I have no exact private house in London; but I know a public one—commodious."

"Be it so. After you, sir."

As they descended the stairs, the old woman-servant stood at the street door. Rugge went out first—the woman detained Losely.

"Do you find her altered?"

"Whom? Mrs. Crane?—why, years will

tell. But you seem to have known me—I don't remember you."

"Not Bridgett Greggs?"

"Is it possible? I left you a middle-aged, rosy-faced woman. True, I recognize you now.—There's a crown for you. I wish I had more to spare!"

Bridget pushed back the silver.

"No—I dare not! Take money from you, Jasper Losely! Mistress would not forgive me!"

Losely, not unreluctantly, restored the crown to his pocket; and, with a snort rather than sigh, of relief, stepped into open daylight. As he crossed the street to join Rugge, who was waiting for him on the shady side, he mechanically turned to look back at the house, and, at the open window of an upper story, he beheld again those shining eyes which had glared down on him from the stairs. He tried to smile, and waved his hand feebly. The eyes seemed to return the smile; and as he walked down the street, arm-in-arm with the ruffian manager, slowly recovering his springy step, and in the gloss of the new garments that set forth his still symmetrical proportions, the eyes followed him watchfully—steadfastly—till his form had vanished, and the dull street was once more a solitude.

Then Arabella Crane turned from the window. Putting her hand to her heart, "How it beats," she muttered; "if in love or in hate, in scorn or in pity, beats once more with a human emotion. He will come again—whether for money or for woman's wit, what care I?—he will come.—I will hold, I will cling to him, no more to part—for better for worse, as it should have been once at the altar. And the child?" she paused; was it compunction? "The child!" she continued fiercely, and as if lashing herself into rage, "The child of that treacherous, hateful mother—yes! I will help him to sell her back as a stage-show—help him in all that does not lift her to a state from which she may look down with disdain on me. Revenge on her, on that cruel house—revenge is sweet. Oh! that it were revenge alone that bids me cling to him who deserves revenge the most." She closed her burning eyes, and sate down droopingly, rocking herself to and fro like one in pain.

CHAPTER XVII.

In life it is difficult to say who do you the most mischief, enemies with the worst intentions, or friends with the best.

THE conference between Mr. Rugge and Mr. Losely terminated in an appointment to meet, the next day, at the village in which this story opened. Meanwhile Mr. Rugge would return to his "orphans," and arrange performances in which, for some days, they might dispense with a Father's part. Losely, on his side, undertook to devote the intervening hours to consultation with a solicitor, to whom Mr. Rugge recommended him, as to the prompt obtaining of legal powers to enforce the authority he asserted himself to possess. He would also persuade Mrs. Crane to accompany him to the village, and aid in the requisite investigations—entertaining a tacit but instinctive belief in the superiority of her acuteness. "Set a female to catch a female," quoth Mr. Rugge.

On the day and in the place thus fixed, the three hunters opened their chase. They threw off at the Cobbler's stall. They soon caught the same scent which had been followed by the lawyer's clerk. They arrived at Mrs. Saunders'—there the two men would have been at fault like their predecessor. But the female was more astute. To drop the metaphor, Mrs. Saunders could not stand the sharp cross-examination of one of her own sex. "That woman deceives us," said Mrs. Crane, on leaving the house. "They have not gone to London. What could they do there? Any man with a few stage juggling tricks can get on in country villages, but would be lost in cities. Perhaps, as it seems he has got a dog—we have found out that from Mrs. Saunders—he will make use of it for an itinerant puppet-show."

"Punch!" said Mr. Rugge—"not a doubt of it."

"In that case," observed Mrs. Crane, "they are probably not far off. Let us print handbills, offering a reward for their clue, and luring the old man himself by an assurance that the inquiry is made in order that he may learn of something to his advantage."

In the course of the evening the handbills were printed. The next day they were posted up on the walls, not only of that village, but

on those of the small towns and hamlets for some miles round. The handbills ran invitingly thus: "If William Waife, who left —— on the 20 ult., will apply at the Red Lion Inn at ——, for X. X., he will learn of something greatly to his advantage. A reward of £5 will be given to any one who will furnish information where the said William Waife, and the little girl who accompanies him, may be found. The said William Waife is about sixty years of age, of middle stature, strongly built, has lost one eye, and is lame of one leg. The little girl, called Sophy, is twelve years old, but looks younger; has blue eyes and light brown hair. They had with them a white French poodle dog. This bill is printed by the friends of the missing party." The next day passed—no information; but on the day following, a young gentleman of good mien dressed in black, rode into the town, stopped at the Red Lion Inn, and asked to see X. X. The two men were out on their researches. — Mrs. Crane stayed at home to answer inquiries.

The gentleman was requested to dismount, and walk in. Mrs. Crane received him in the inn parlor, which swarmed with flies. She stood in the centre—vigilant, grim spider of the place.

"I ca-ca-call," said the gentleman, stammering fearfully, "in con-consequence of a b-b-bill —I—ch-chanced to see in my ri-ri-ri-ride yesterday—on a wa-wa-wall:—You—you, I—sup-sup——"

"Am X. X." put in Mrs. Crane, growing impatient, "one of the friends of Mr. Waife, by whom the handbill has been circulated; it will indeed be a great relief to us to know where they are—the little girl more especially."

Mrs. Crane was respectably dressed—in silk, iron-gray; she had crisped her flaky tresses into stiff hard ringlets, that fell like long screws from under a black velvet band. Mrs. Crane never wore a cap—nor could you fancy her in a cap; but the velvet band looked as rigid as if gummed to a hoop of steel. Her manner and tone of voice were those of an educated person, not unused to some society above the vulgar; and yet the visitor, in whom the reader recognizes the piscatorial Oxonian, with whom Waife had interchanged philosophy on the marge of the running brooklet, drew back as she advanced and spoke; and, bent on an errand of kindness, he was seized with a vague misgiving.

Mrs. Crane (blandly).—"I fear they must be badly off. I hope they are not wanting the necessaries of life. But pray be seated, sir." She looked at him again, and with more respect in her address than she had before thrown into it, added, with a half curtsy, as she seated herself by his side, "A clergyman of the Established Church, I presnme, sir?"

Oxonian (stammer, as on a former occasion, respectfully omitted).—"With this defect, ma'am!—But to the point. Some days ago I happened to fall in with an elderly person, such as is described, with a very pretty female child, and a French dog. The man—gentleman, perhaps I may call him, judging from his conversation—interested me much; so did the little girl. And if I could be the means of directing real friends anxious to serve them—"

Mrs. Crane.—"You would indeed be a benefactor. And where are they now, sir?"

Oxonian.—"That I cannot positively tell you. But before I say more, will you kindly satisfy my curiosity? He is perhaps an eccentric person—this Mr. Waife?—a little——" The Oxonian stopped, and touched his forehead. Mrs. Crane made no prompt reply—she was musing. Unwarily the scholar continued: "Because, in that case, I should not like to interfere."

Mrs. Crane.—"Quite right, sir. His own friends would not interfere with his roving ways, his little whims on any account. Poor man, why should they? He has no property for them to covet. But it is a long story. I had the care of that dear little girl from her infancy; sweet child!"

Oxonian.—"So she seems."

Mrs. Crane.—"And now she has a most comfortable home provided for her; and a young girl, with good friends, ought not to be tramping about the country, whatever an old man may do. You must allow that sir?"

Oxonian.—"Well—yes, I allow that; it occurred to me. But what *is* the man?—the gentleman?"

Mrs. Crane.—"Very 'eccentric,' as you say, and inconsiderate, perhaps, as to the little girl. We will not call it insane, sir. But—are you married?"

Oxonian (blushing).—"No, ma'am."

MRS. CRANE.—"But you have a sister, perhaps?"

OXONIAN.—"Yes; I have one sister."

MRS. CRANE.—"Would you like your sister to be running about the country in that way—carried off from her home, kindred, and friends?"

OXONIAN.—"Ah! I understand. The poor little girl is fond of the old man—a relation, grandfather perhaps? and he has taken her from her home; and though not actually insane, he is still——"

MRS. CRANE.—"An unsafe guide for a female child, delicately reared. *I* reared her; of good prospects, too. O sir, let us save the child! Look—" She drew from a side-pocket in her stiff irony-gray apron a folded paper; she placed it in the Oxonian's hand; he glanced over and returned it.

"I see ma'am. I cannot hesitate after this. It is a good many miles off where I met the persons whom I have no doubt that you seek; and two or three days ago my father received a letter from a very worthy, excellent man, with whom he is often brought into communication upon benevolent objects—a Mr. Hartopp, the Mayor of Gatesboro', in which, among other matters, the Mayor mentioned briefly that the Literary Institute of that town had been much delighted by the performance of a very remarkable man with one eye, about whom there seemed some mystery, with a little girl and a learned dog; and I can't help thinking that the man, the girl, and the dog, must be those whom I saw, and you seek."

MRS. CRANE.—"At Gatesboro'? is that far?"

OXONIAN.—"Some way; but you can get a cross train from this village. I hope that the old man will not be separated from the little girl; they seemed very fond of each other."

MRS CRANE.—"No doubt of it; very fond; it would be cruel to separate them. A comfortable home for both. I don't know, sir, if I dare offer to a gentleman of your evident rank the reward,—but for the poor of your parish."

OXONIAN.—"Oh, ma'am, our poor want for nothing; my father is rich. But if you would oblige me by a line after you have found these interesting persons—I am going to a distant part of the country to-morrow—to Montfort Court, in ——shire."

MRS. CRANE.—"To Lord Montfort—the head of the noble family of Vipont?"

OXONIAN.—"Yes; do you know any of the family, ma'am? If you could refer me to one of them, I should feel more satisfied as to—"

MRS. CRANE (hastily).—"Indeed, sir, every one must know that great family by name and repute. I know no more. So you are going to Lord Montfort's! The Marchioness, they say, is very beautiful?"

OXONIAN.—"And good as beautiful. I have the honor to be connected both with her and Lord Montfort; they are cousins and my grandfather was a Vipont. I should have told you my name—Morley; George Vipont Morley."

Mrs. Crane made a profound curtsy, and, with an unmistakable smile of satisfaction, said, as if half in soliloquy—"So it is to one of that noble family—to a Vipont—that the dear child will owe her restoration to my embrace! Bless you, sir!"

"I hope I have done right," said George Vipont Morley, as he mounted his horse. "I must have done right, surely!" he said again, when he was on the high-road. "I fear I have not done right," he said a third time, as the face of Mrs. Crane began to haunt him; and when at sunset he reached his home, tired out, horse and man, with an unusually long ride, and the green water-bank on which he had overheard poor Waife's simple grace and joyous babble came in sight—"After all," he said, dolefully, "it was no business of mine. I meant well; but—" His little sister ran to the gate to greet him—"Yes! I did quite right. How should I like my sister to be roving the country, and acting at Literary Institutes with a poodle dog? Quite right; kiss me, Jane!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

Let a king and a beggar converse freely together, and it is the beggar's fault if he does not say something which makes the king lift his hat to him.

THE scene shifts back to Gatesboro', the forenoon of the day succeeding the memorable Exhibition at the Institute of that learned town. Mr. Hartopp was in the little parlor behind his country-house, his hours of business much broken into by those intruders who deem

no time unseasonable for the indulgence of curiosity, the interchange of thought, or the interests of general humanity and of national enlightenment. The excitement produced on the previous evening by Mr. Chapman, Sophy, and Sir Isaac, was greatly on the increase. Persons who had seen them naturally called on the Mayor to talk over the Exhibition. Persons who had not seen them, still more naturally dropped in just to learn what was really Mr. Mayor's private opinion. The little parlor was thronged by a regular levee. There was the proprietor of a dismal building, still called "The Theatre," which was seldom let except at election time, when it was hired by the popular candidate for the delivery of those harangues upon liberty and conscience, tyranny and oppression, which furnish the staple of declamation equally to the dramatist and the orator.

There was also the landlord of the Royal Hotel, who had lately built to his house "The City Concert-room,"—a superb apartment, but a losing speculation. There, too, were three highly respectable persons, of a serious turn of mind, who came to suggest doubts whether an entertainment of so frivolous a nature was not injurious to the morality of Gatesboro'. Besides these notables, there were loungers and gossips, with no particular object except that of ascertaining who Mr. Chapman was by birth and parentage, and suggesting the expediency of a deputation, ostensibly for the purpose of asking him to repeat his performance, but charged with private instructions to cross-examine him as to his pedigree. The gentle Mayor kept his eyes fixed on a mighty ledger-book, pen in hand. The attitude was a rebuke on intruders, and in ordinary times would have been so considered. But mildness, however majestic, is not always effective in periods of civic commotion. The room was animated by hubbub. You caught broken sentences here and there crossing each other, like the sounds that had been frozen in the air, and set free by a thaw, according to the veracious narrative of Baron Munchausen.

PLAYHOUSE PROPRIETOR.—"The theatre is the—"

SERIOUS GENTLEMAN.—"Plausible snare by which a population, at present grave and well-disposed, is decoyed into becoming—"

EXCITED ADMIRER.—"A French poodle, sir, that plays at dominoes like a—"

CREDULOUS CONJECTURER.—"Benevolent philanthropist, condescending to act for the benefit of some distressed brother who is—"

PROPRIETOR OF CITY CONCERT-ROOM.—"One hundred and twenty feet long by forty, Mr. Mayor! Talk of that damp theatre, sir, you might as well talk of the—"

Suddenly the door flew open, and pushing aside a clerk who designed to announce to him, in burst Mr. Chapman himself.

He had evidently expected to find the Mayor alone, for at the sight of that throng he checked himself, and stood mute at the threshold. The levee for a moment was no less surprised, and no less mute. But the good folks soon recovered themselves. To many it was a pleasure to accost and congratulate the man who the night before had occasioned to them emotions so agreeable. Cordial smiles broke out—friendly hands were thrust forth. Brief but hearty compliments, mingled with entreaties to renew the performance to a larger audience, were showered round. The Comedian stood hat in hand, mechanically passing his sleeve over its nap, muttering half inaudibly, "You see before you a man"—and turning his single eye from one face to the other, as if struggling to guess what was meant, or where he was. The Mayor rose and came forward—"My dear friends," said he mildly, "Mr. Chapman calls by appointment. Perhaps he may have something to say to me confidentially."

The three serious gentlemen, who had hitherto remained aloof, eyeing Mr. Chapman, much as three inquisitors might have eyed a Jew, shook three solemn head, and set the example of retreat. The last to linger were the rival proprietors of the theatre and the city concert-room. Each whispered the stranger—one the left ear, one the right. Each thrust into his hand a printed paper. As the door closed on them the Comedian let fall the papers; his arm drooped to his side; his whole frame seemed to collapse. Hartopp took him by the hand, and led him gently to his own arm-chair beside the table. The Comedian dropped on the chair, still without speaking.

MR. HARTOPP.—"What is the matter? What has happened?"

WAIFE.—"She is very ill;—in a bad way; the doctor says so—Dr. Gill."

MR. HARTOPP (feelingly).—"Your little girl in a bad way! Oh, no; doctors always exaggerate in order to get more credit for the cure. Not that I would disparage Dr. Gill—fellow-townsman—first-rate man. Still 'tis the way with doctors to talk cheerfully if one is in danger, and to look solemn if there is nothing to fear."

WAIFE.—"Do you think so—you have children of your own, sir?—of her age, too?—Eh! eh!"

MR. HARTOPP.—"Yes; I know all about children—better, I think, than Mrs. H. does. What is the complaint?"

WAIFE.—"The doctor says it is low fever."

MR. HARTOPP.—"Caused by nervous excitement, perhaps."

WAIFE (looking up).—"Yes—that's what he says—nervous excitement."

MR. HARTOPP.—"Clever sensitive children, subjected precociously to emulation and emotion, are always liable to such maladies. My third girl, Anna Maria, fell into a low fever, caused by nervous excitement in trying for school prizes."

WAIFE.—"Did she die of it, sir?"

MR. HARTOPP (shuddering).—"Die—no! I removed her from school—set her to take care of the poultry—forbade all French exercises, made her take English exercise instead—and ride on a donkey. She's quite another thing now—cheeks as red as an apple, and as firm as a cricket-ball."

WAIFE.—"I will keep poultry; I will buy a donkey. Oh, sir! you don't think she will go to heaven yet, and leave me here?"

MR. HARTOPP.—"Not if you give her rest and quiet. But no excitement—no exhibitions."

WAIFE (emptying his pockets on the table). "Will you kindly count that money, sir? Don't you think that would be enough to find her some pretty lodging hereabouts till she gets quite strong again? With green fields—she's fond of green fields, and a farm-yard with poultry—though we were lodging a few days ago with a good woman who kept hens, and Sophy did not seem to take to them much. A canary bird is more of a companion, and—"

HARTOPP (interrupting).—"Ay—ay—and you! what would you do?"

WAIFE.—"Why, I and the dog would go away for a little while about the country."

HARTOPP.—"Exhibiting?"

WAIFE.—"That money will not last for ever, and what can we do—I and the dog—in order to get more for her?"

HARTOPP (pressing his hand warmly).—"You are a good man, sir. I am sure of it; you cannot have done things which you should be afraid to tell me. Make me your confidant, and I may then find some employment fit for you, and you need not separate yourself from your little girl."

WAIFE.—"Separate from her! I should only leave her for a few days at a time till she gets well. This money would keep her—how long? Two months? three? how long?—the doctor would not charge much."

HARTOPP.—"You will not confide in me then? At your age—have you no friends—no one to speak a good word for you?"

WAIFE (jerking up his head with a haughty air).—"So—so! Who talks to you about me, sir? I am speaking of my innocent child. Does she want a good word spoken for her? Heaven has written it in her face."

Hartopp persisted no more; the excellent man was sincerely grieved at his visitor's obstinate avoidance of the true question at issue; for the Mayor could have found employment for a man of Waife's evident education and talent. But such employment would entail responsibilities and trust. How recommend to it a man of whose life and circumstances nothing could be known—a man without a character?—And Waife interested him deeply. We have all felt that there are some persons towards whom we are attracted by a peculiar sympathy not to be explained—a something in the manner, the cut of the face, the tone of the voice. If there are fifty applicants for a benefit in our gift, one of the fifty wins his way to our preference at first sight, though with no better right to it than his fellows. We can no more say why we like the man than we can say why we fall in love with a woman in whom no one else would discover a charm. "There is," says a Latin love-poet, "no why or wherefore in liking." Hartopp, therefore, had taken, from the first moment, to Waife—the staid, respectable, thriving man, all muffled up from head to foot in the whitest lawn of reputation—to the wan-

dering, shifty, tricksome scatterling, who had not seemingly secured, through the course of a life bordering upon age, a single certificate for good conduct.

On his hearthstone, beside his ledger-book, stood the Mayor, looking with a respectful admiration that puzzled himself upon the forlorn creature, who could give no reason why he should not be rather in the Gatesboro' Parish Stocks than in its chief magistrate's easy-chair. Yet, were the Mayor's sympathetic liking and respectful admiration wholly unaccountable? Runs there not between one warm human heart and another the electric chain of a secret understanding? In that maimed outcast, so stubbornly hard to himself—so tremulously sensitive for his sick child—was there not the majesty to which they who have learned that Nature has her nobles, reverently bow the head! A man, true to man's grave religion, can no more despise a life wrecked in all else, while a hallowing affection stands out sublime through the rents and chinks of fortune, than he can profane with rude mockery a temple in ruins—if still left there the altar.

CHAPTER XIX.

Very well so far as it goes.

MR. HARTOPP.—"I cannot presume to question you further, Mr. Chapman. But to one of your knowledge of the world, I need not say that your silence deprives me of the power to assist yourself. We'll talk no more of that."

WAIFE.—"Thank you gratefully, Mr. Mayor."

MR. HARTOPP.—"But for the little girl, make your mind easy—at least for the present. I will place her at my farm cottage. My bailiff's wife, a kind woman, will take care of her, while you pursue your calling elsewhere. As for this money, you will want it yourself; your poor little child shall cost you nothing. So that's settled. Let me come up and see her. I am a bit of a doctor myself. Every man blest with a large family, in whose house there is always some interesting case of small-pox, measles, hooping-cough, scarlatina, etc., has a good private practice of his own. I'm not brilliant in book-learning, Mr. Chapman. But as to children's complaints in a practical way." added Hartopp, with a glow of pride, "Mrs. H. says she'd rather trust the little ones to me than to Dr. Gill. I'll see your child, and set her up, I'll be bound. But now I think of it." continued Hartopp, softening more and more, "if exhibit you must, why not stay at Gatesboro' for a time? More may be made in this town than elsewhere."

"No, no; I could not have the heart to act here again without her. I feel at present as if I can never again act at all! Something else will turn up. Providence is so kind to me, Mr. Mayor."

"Waife turned to the door—"You will come soon?" he said, anxiously.

The Mayor, who had been locking up his ledgers and papers, replied, "I will but stay to give some orders; in a quarter of an hour I shall be at your hotel."

CHAPTER XX.

Sophy hides heart and shows temper.

THE child was lying on a sofa drawn near the window in her own room, and on her lap was the doll Lionel had given to her. Carried with her in her wanderings, she had never played with it; never altered a ribbon in its yellow tresses: but at least once a-day she had taken it forth and looked at it in secret. And all that morning, left much to herself, it had been her companion. She was smoothing down its frock, which she fancied had got ruffled—smoothing it down with a sort of fearful tenderness, the doll all the while staring her full in the face with its blue bead eyes. Waife, seated near her, was trying to talk gaily; to invent fairy tales blithe with sport and fancy; but his invention flagged, and the fairies prosed awfully.

He had placed the dominoes before Sir Isaac, but Sophy had scarcely looked at them, from the languid heavy eyes on which the doll so stupidly fixed its own. Sir Isaac himself seemed spiritless; he was aware that something was wrong. Now and then he got up restlessly, sniffed the dominoes, and placed a paw gently, very gently on Sophy's knee. Not being encouraged, he lay down again uneasily,

often shifting his position as if the floor was grown too hard for him. Thus the Mayor found the three. He approached Sophy with the step of a man accustomed to sick-rooms and ailing children—step light as if shod with felt—put his hand on her shoulder, kissed her forehead, and then took the doll. Sophy, started, and took it back from him quickly, but without a word; then she hid it behind her pillow. The Mayor smiled—"My dear child, do you think I should hurt your doll?"

Sophy colored and said, murmuringly, "No, sir, not hurt it, but—" she stopped short.

"I have been talking to your grandpapa about you, my dear, and we both wish to give you a little holiday. Dolls are well enough for the winter, but green fields and daisy chains for the summer."

Sophy glanced from the Mayor to her grandfather, and back again to the Mayor, shook her curls from her eyes, and looked seriously inquisitive.

The Mayor observing her quietly, stole her hand into his own, feeling the pulse as if merely caressing the slender wrist. Then he began to describe his bailiff's cottage, with woodbine round the porch, the farmyard, the bee-hives, the pretty duck-pond with an osier island, and the great China gander who had a pompous strut, which made him the drollest creature possible. And Sophy should go there in a day or two, and be as happy as one of the bees, but not so busy.

Sophy listened very earnestly, very gravely, and then sliding her hand from the Mayor, caught hold of her grandfather's arm firmly, and said, "And you, Grandy—will you like it?—won't it be dull for you, Grandy, dear?"

"Why, my darling," said Waife, "I and Sir Isaac will go and take a stroll about the country for a few weeks, and—"

SOPHY (passionately).—"I thought so; I thought he meant that. I tried not to believe it; go away—you! and who's to take care of you? who'll understand you? I want care! I—I! No, no, it is you—you who want care. I shall be well to-morrow—quite well, don't fear. He shall not be sent away from me; he shall not, sir. Oh, grandfather, grandfather, how could you?" She flung herself on his breast, clinging there—clinging as if infancy and age were but parts of the same whole.

"But," said the Mayor, "it is not as if you were going to school, my dear; you are going for a holiday. And your grandfather must leave you—must travel about—'tis his calling. If you fell ill and were with him, think how much you would be in his way. Do you know," he added, smiling, "I shall begin to fear that you are selfish."

"Selfish!" exclaimed Waife, angrily.

"Selfish!" echoed Sophy, with a melancholy scorn that came from a sentiment so deep that mortal eye could scarce fathom it. "Oh, no, sir! can you say it is for *his* good, not for, what he supposes, mine, that you want us to part? The pretty cottage, and all for me—and what for him?—tramp, tramp along the hot dusty roads. Do you see that he is lame? Oh, sir, I know him—you don't. Selfish! he would have no merry ways that make you laugh without me; would you, Grandy, dear? Go away, you are a naughty man—go, or I shall hate you as much as that dreadful Mr. Rugge."

"Rugge—who is he?" said the Mayor, curiously, catching at any clue.

"Hush, my darling!—hush!" said Waife, fondling her on his breast. "Hush! What is to be done, sir?"

Hartopp made a sly sign to him, to say no more before Sophy, and then replied, addressing himself to her—

"What is to be done? Nothing shall be done, my dear child, that you dislike. I don't wish to part you two. Don't hate me—lie down again—that's a dear. There, I have smoothed your pillow for you; oh, here's your pretty doll again."

Sophy snatched at the doll petulantly, and made what the French call a *moue* at the good man as she suffered her grandfather to replace her on the sofa.

"She has a strong temper of her own," muttered the Mayor; "so has Anna Maria a strong temper!"

Now, if I were anyway master of my own pen, and could write as I pleased, without being hurried along helter-skelter, by the tyrannical exactions of that "young Rapid" in buskins and chiton, called "THE HISTORIC MUSE," I would break off this chapter, open my window, rest my eyes on the green lawn without, and indulge in a rhapsodical digression upon that beautifier of the moral life which is called "Good Temper." Ha—the

Historic Muse is dozing. By her leave!—Softly.

CHAPTER XXI.

Being an Essay on Temper in general, and a hazardous experiment on the reader's in particular.

THERE, the window is open! how instinctively the eye rests upon the green! how the calm color lures and soothes it. But is there to the green only a single hue? See how infinite the variety of its tints! What sombre gravity in yon cedar, yon motionless pine-tree! What lively but unvarying laugh in yon glossy laurels! Do those tints charm us like the play in the young leaves of the lilac—lighter here, darker there, as the breeze (and so slight the breeze!) stirs them into checker—into ripple? Oh sweet green, to the world what sweet temper is to man's life! Who would reduce into one dye all thy lovely varieties? who exclude the dark steadfast verdure that lives on through the winter day; or the mutinous caprice of the gentler, younger tint that came fresh through the tears of April, and will shadow with sportive tremor the blooms or luxuriant June?

Happy the man on whose marriage-hearth temper smiles kind from the eyes of woman! "No deity present," saith the heathen proverb, "where absent—Prudence"—no joy long a guest where Peace, is not a dweller. Peace, so like Faith, that they may be taken for each other, and poets have clad them with the same veil. But in childhood, in early youth, expect not the changeless green of the cedar. Wouldst thou distinguish fine temper from spiritless dulness, from cold simulation—ask less what the temper, than what the disposition.

Is the nature sweet and trustful, is it free from the morbid self-love which calls itself "sensitive feeling" and frets at imaginary offences; is the tendency to be grateful for kindness—yet take kindness meekly, and accept as a benefit what the vain call a due? From dispositions thus blessed, sweet temper will come forth to gladden thee, spontaneous and free. Quick with some, with some slow, word and look emerge out of the heart. Be thy first question, "Is the heart itself generous and tender?" If it be so, self-control comes with deepening affection. Call not that a good heart which, hastening to sting if a fibre be ruffled, cries, "I am no hypocrite." Accept that excuse, and revenge becomes virtue. But where the heart, if it give the offence, pines till it win back the pardon; if offended itself, bounds forth to forgive, ever longing to soothe, ever grieved if it wound; then be sure that its nobleness will need but few trials of pain in each outbreak, to refine and chastise its expression. Fear not then; be but noble thyself, thou art safe!

Yet what in childhood is often called, rebukingly, "temper," is but the cordial and puissant vitality which contains all the elements that make temper the sweetest at last. Who amongst us, how wise soever, can construe a child's heart? who conjecture all the springs that secretly vibrate within, to a touch on the surface of feeling? Each child, but especially the girl-child, would task the whole lore of a sage, deep as Shakespeare, to distinguish those subtle emotions which we grown folks have outlived.

"She has a strong temper," said the Mayor, when Sophy snatched the doll from his hand a second time, and pouted at him, spoiled child, looking so divinely cross, so petulantly pretty. And how on earth could the Mayor know what associations with that stupid doll made her think it profaned by the touch of a stranger? Was it to her eyes as to his—mere waxwork and frippery, or a symbol of holy remembrances, of gleams into a fairer world, of "devotion to something afar from the sphere of her sorrow?" Was not the evidence of "strong temper" the very sign of affectionate depth of heart? Poor little Sophy. Hide it again—safe out of sight—close, inscrutable, unguessed, as childhood's first treasures of sentiment ever are!

CHAPTER XXII.

The object of Civilization being always to settle people one way or the other, the Mayor of Gatesboro' entertains a statesmanlike ambition to settle Gentleman Waife: no doubt a wise conception, and in accordance with the genius of the Nation.—Every Session of Parliament, England is employed in settling folks, whether at home or at the Antipodes, who ignorantly object to be settled in her way; in short, "I'll settle them," has become a vulgar idiom, tantamount to a threat of uttermost extermination or smash.—Therefore the Mayor of Gatesboro', harboring that benignant idea with reference to "Gentleman Waife," all kindly readers will exclaim, "Dii Meliora! What will he do with it?"

THE doll once more safe behind the pillow, Sophy's face gradually softened; she bent forward, touched the Mayor's hand timidly, and looked at him with pleading, penitent eyes, still wet with tears—eyes that said, though the lips were silent—"I'll not hate you. I was ungrateful and peevish; may I beg pardon?"

"I forgive you with all my heart," cried the Mayor, interpreting the look aright. "And now try and compose yourself and sleep while I talk with your grandpapa below."

"I don't see how it is possible that I can leave her," said Waife, when the two men had adjourned to the sitting-room.

"I am sure," quoth the Mayor, seriously, "that it is the best thing for her; her pulse has much nervous excitability; she wants a complete rest; she ought not to move about with you on any account. But come—though I must not know, it seems, who and what you are, Mr. Chapman—I don't think you will run off with my cows, and if you like to stay at the bailiff's cottage for a week or two with your grandchild, you shall be left in peace, and asked no questions. I will own to you a weakness of mine—I value myself on being seldom or never taken in. I don't think I could forgive the man who did take me in. But taken in I certainly shall be, if, despite all your mystery, you are not as honest a fellow as ever stood upon shoe-leather! So come to the cottage."

Waife was very much affected by this confiding kindness; but he shook his head despondently, and that same abject, almost cringing humility of mien and manner which had pained, at times, Lionel and Vance, crept over the whole man, so that he seemed to cower and shrink as a Pariah before a Brahmin. "No sir; thank you most humbly. No, sir—that must not be. I must work for my daily bread, if what a poor vagabond like me may do can be called work. I have made it a rule for years not to force myself to the hearth and home of any kind man, who, not knowing my past, has a right to suspect me. Where I lodge, I pay as a lodger; or whatever favor shown me spares my purse, I try to return in some useful humble way. Why, sir, how could I make free and easy with another man's board and roof-tree for days or weeks together, when I would not even come to your hearthstone for a cup of tea?" The Mayor remembered, and was startled. Waife hurried on. "But for my poor child I have no such scruples—no shame, no false pride. I take what you offer her gratefully—gratefully. Ah, sir, she is not in her right place with me; but there's no use kicking against the pricks. Where was I? Oh! well, I tell you what we will do, sir. I will take her to the cottage in a day or two—as soon as she is well enough to go—and spend the day with her, and deceive her, sir! yes, deceive, cheat her, sir! I *am* a cheat—a player—and she'll think I'm going to stay with her; and at night, when she's asleep, I'll creep off, I and the other dog. But I'll leave a letter for her—it will soothe her, and she'll be patient and wait. I will come back again to see her in a week, and once every week till she's well again."

"And what will you do?"

"I don't know—but," said the actor, forcing a laugh—"I'm not a man likely to starve. Oh, never fear, sir."

So the Mayor went away, and strolled across the fields to his bailiff's cottage, to prepare for the guest it would receive.

"It is all very well that the poor man should be away for some days," thought Mr. Hartopp. "Before he comes again, I shall have hit on some plan to serve him; and I can learn more about him from the child in his absence, and see what he is really fit for. There's a schoolmaster wanted in Morley's village. Old Morley wrote to me to recommend him one. Good salary—pretty house. But it would be wrong to set over young children—recommend to a respectable proprietor and his son—a man whom I know nothing about. Impossible! that will not do. If there was any place of light service which did not require trust or re-

sponsibility—but there is no such place in Great Britain. Suppose I were to set him up in some easy way of business—a little shop, eh? I don't know. What would Williams say? If, indeed, I were taken in!—if the man I am thus credulously trusting turned out a rogue"—the Mayor paused and actually shivered at that thought—"why then, I should be fallen indeed. My wife would not let me have half-a-crown in my pockets; and I could not walk a hundred yards but Williams would be at my heels to protect me from being stolen by gypsies. Taken in by him!—No, impossible! But if it turn out as I suspect—that, contrary to vulgar prudence, I am divining a really great and good man in difficulties—Aha, what a triumph I shall then gain over them all! How Williams will revere me!" The good man laughed aloud at that thought, and walked on with a prouder step.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A pretty trifle in its way, no doubt, is the love between youth and youth—Gay varieties of the bauble spread the counter of the Great Toy-Shop—But thou, courteous Dame Nature, raise thine arm to yon shelf, somewhat out of everyday reach, and bring me down that obsolete, neglected, unconsidered thing, the Love between Age and Childhood.

THE next day Sophy was better—the day after, improvement was more visible—and on the third day Waife paid his bill, and conducted her to the rural abode to which, credulous at last of his promises to share it with her for a time, he enticed her fated steps. It was little more than a mile beyond the suburbs of the town, and though the walk tired her, she concealed fatigue, and would not suffer him to carry her. The cottage now smiled out before them—thatched gable roof, with fancy barge-board—half Swiss, half what is called Elizabethan—all the fences and sheds round it, as only your rich traders, condescending to turn farmers, construct and maintain—sheds and fences, trim and neat, as if models in wax-work. The breezy air came fresh from the new hay-stacks—from the woodbine round the porch—from the breath of the lazy kine, as they stood knee-deep in the pool, that, belted with weeds and broad-leaved water-lilies, lay calm and gleaming amidst level pastures.

Involuntarily they arrested their steps, to gaze on the cheerful landscape and inhale the balmy air. Meanwhile the Mayor came out from the cottage porch, his wife leaning on his arm, and two of his younger children bounding on before, with joyous faces, giving chase to a gaudy butterfly which they had started from the woodbine.

Mrs. Hartopp had conceived a lively curiosity to see and judge for herself of the objects of her liege lord's benevolent interest. She shared, of course, the anxiety which formed the standing excitement of all those who lived but for one god-like purpose, that of preserving Josiah Hartopp from being taken in. But whenever the Mayor specially wished to secure his wife's countenance to any pet project of his own, and convince her either that he was not taken in, or that to be discreetly taken in is in this world a very popular and sure mode of getting up, he never failed to attain his end. That man was the cunningest creature! As full of wiles and stratagems in order to get his own way—in benevolent objects—as men who set up to be clever are for selfish ones. Mrs. Hartopp was certainly a good woman, but a *made* good woman. Married to another man, I suspect that she would have been a shrew. Petruchio would never have tamed her, I'll swear. But she, poor lady, had been gradually, but completely, subdued, subjugated, absolutely cowed beneath the weight of her spouse's despotic mildness; for in Hartopp there *was* a weight of soft quietude, of placid oppression, wholly irresistible.

It would have buried a Titaness under a Pelion of moral feather-beds. Mass upon mass of downy influence descended upon you, seemingly yielding as it fell, enveloping, overbearing, stifling you—not presenting a single hard point of contact—giving in as you pushed against it—supplying itself seductively round you, softer and softer, heavier and heavier, till, I assure you, ma'am, no matter how high your natural wifely spirit, you would have had it smothered out of you, your last rebellious murmur dying languidly away under the descending fleeces.

"So kind in you to come with me, Mary," said Hartopp. "I could not have been happy without your approval—look at the child—something about her like Mary Anne, and Mary Anne is the picture of you!"

Waife advanced, uncovering; the two children, having lost trace of the butterfly, had run up towards Sophy. But her shy look made themselves shy—shyness is so contagious—and they stood a little aloof, gazing at her. Sir Isaac stalked direct to the Mayor, sniffed at him, and wagged his tail.

Mrs. Hartopp now bent over Sophy, and acknowledging that the face was singularly pretty, glanced graciously towards her husband, and said, "I see the likeness!" then to Sophy, "I fear you are tired, my dear; you must not over-fatigue yourself—and you must take milk fresh from the cow every morning." And now the bailiff's wife came briskly out, a tidy, fresh-colored, kind-faced woman, fond of children—the more so because she had none of her own.

So they entered the farmyard—Mrs. Hartopp being the chief talker; and she, having pointed out to Sophy the cows and the turkeys, the hen-coops, and the great China gander, led her by the one hand—while Sophy's other hand clung firmly to Waife's—across the little garden, with its patent bee-hives, into the house, took off her bonnet, and kissed her. "Very like Mary Anne!—Mary Anne, dear." One of the two children owning that name approached — snub-nosed, black-eyed, with cheeks like peonies. "This little girl, my Mary Anne, was as pale as you—over-study; and now, my dear child, you must try and steal a little of her color. Don't you think my Mary Anne is like her papa, Mr. Chapman?"

"Like me!" exclaimed the Mayor; whispering Waife—"image of her mother?—the same intellectual look!"

Said the artful Actor, "Indeed, ma'am, the young lady has her father's mouth and eyebrows, but that acute, sensible expression is yours—quite yours. Sir Isaac, make a bow to the young lady, and then, sir, go through the sword exercise!"

The dog, put upon his tricks, delighted the children; and the poor actor, though his heart lay in his breast like lead, did his best to repay benevolence by mirth. Finally, much pleased, Mrs. Hartopp took her husband's arm to depart. The children, on being separated from Sir Isaac, began to cry. The Mayor interrupted his wife—who, if left to herself, would have scolded them into worse crying—told Mary Anne that he relied on her strong intellect to console her brother Tom; observed to Tom that it was not like his manly nature to set an example of weeping to his sister; and contrived thus to flatter their tears away in a trice, and sent them forward in a race to the turnstile.

Waife and Sophy were alone in the cottage parlor,—Mr. Gooch, the bailiff's wife, walking part of the way back with the good couple, in order to show the Mayor a heifer who had lost appetite and taken to moping. "Let us steal out into the back-garden, my darling," said Waife. "I see an arbor there, where I will compose myself with a pipe, a liberty I should not like to take in-doors." They stepped across the threshold, and gained the arbor, which stood at the extreme end of the small kitchen-garden, and commanded a pleasant view of pastures and cornfields, backed by the blue outline of distant hills. Afar were faintly heard the laugh of the Mayor's happy children, now and then a tinkling sheep-bell, or the tap of the wood-pecker, unrepressed by the hush of the midmost summer, which stills the more tuneful choristers amidst their coverts. Waife lighted his pipe, and smoked silently; Sophy, resting her head on his bosom, silent also. She was exquisitely sensitive to nature; the quiet beauty of all round her was soothing a spirit lately troubled, and health came stealing gently back through fame and through heart. At length she said softly—"We could be so happy here, grandfather! It cannot last, can it?"

"'Tis no use in this life, my dear," returned Waife, philosophizing; "no use at all disturbing present happiness by asking 'can it last?' To-day is man's, to-morrow his Maker's. But tell me frankly, do you really dislike so much the idea of exhibiting? I don't mean as we did in Mr. Rugge's show. I know you hate that; but in a genteel private way, as the other night. You sigh! Out with it."

"I like what you like, Grandy."

"That's not true. I like to smoke; you don't. Come, you do dislike acting? Why? you do it so well—wonderfully. Generally speaking, people like what they do so well."

"It is not the acting itself, Grandy dear, that I don't like. When I am in some part, I am carried away—I am not myself. I am some one else!"

"And the applause?"

"I don't feel it? I daresay I should miss it if it did not come; but it does not seem to me as if *I* were applauded. If I felt that, I should stop short, and get frightened. It is as if that somebody else into whom I was changed was making friends with the audience; and all my feeling is for that somebody—just as, Grandy dear, when it is over, and we two are alone together, all my feeling is for you—at least (hanging her head) it used to be; but lately, somehow, I am ashamed to think how I have been feeling for myself more than for you. Is it—is it that I *am* growing selfish? as Mr. Mayor said. Oh no. Now we are here—not in those noisy towns—not in the inns and on the highways;—now *here*, *here*, I do feel again for you—all for you!"

"You are my little angel, you are," said Waife, tremulously. "Selfish! you! a good joke that! Now you see, I am not what is called Domonstrative—a long word, Sophy, which means, that I don't show to you always how fond I am of you; and, indeed," he added ingenuously. "I am not always aware of it myself. I like acting—I like the applause, and the lights, and the excitement, and the illusion—the make-belief of the whole thing; it takes me out of memory and thought—it is a world that has neither past, present, nor future, an interlude in time—an escape from space. I suppose it is the same with poets when they are making verses. Yes, I like all this; and when I think of it, I forget you too much. And I never observed, Heaven forgive me! that you were pale and drooping, till it was pointed out to me. Well, take away your arms. Let us consult! As soon as you get quite, quite well—how shall we live? what shall we do? You are as wise as a little woman, and such a careful, prudent housekeeper; and I'm such a harum-scarum old fellow, without a sound idea in my head. What shall we do if we give up acting altogether?"

"Give up acting altogether, when you like it so! No—no. I will like it too, Grandy But—but—" she stopped short, afraid to imply blame or to give pain.

"But what—let us make clean breasts, one to the other; tell truth, and shame the Father of Lies."

"Tell truth," said Sophy, lifting up to him her pure eyes with such heavenly, loving, kindness, that if the words did imply reproof, the eyes stole it away. "Could we but manage to tell truth off the stage, I should not dislike acting! Oh, grandfather, when that kind gentleman and his lady and those merry children come up and speak to us, don't you feel ready to creep into the earth?—I do. Are we telling truth? are we living truth? one name to-day, another name to-morrow? I should not mind on a stage or in a room, for the time, but always acting, always—we ourselves 'make-beliefs!' Grandfather, must that be! *They* don't do it; I mean by they, all who are good and looked up to and respected, as—as—Oh, Grandy—Grandy—what am I saying? I have pained you."

Waife indeed was striving hard to keep down emotion; but his lips were set firmly and the blood had left them, and his hands were trembling.

"We *must* hide ourselves," he said in a very low voice, "we must take false names—I—because—because of reasons I can't tell even to you—and you, because I failed to get you a proper home, where you ought to be; and there is one who, if he pleases, and he may please it any day, could take you away from me, if he found you out—and so—and so." He paused abruptly, looked at her fearful wondering soft face, and, rising, drew himself up with one of those rare outbreaks of dignity which elevated the whole character of his person. "But as for me," said he, "if I have lost all name,—if, while I live, I must be this wandering, skulking outcast—look above, Sophy—look up above; there all secrets will be known—all hearts read—and there my best hope to find a place in which I may wait your coming, is, in what has lost me all birthright here. Not to exalt myself do I say this—no; but that you may have comfort, darling, if ever hereafter you are pained by what men say to you of me."

As he spoke, the expression of his face, at first solemn and lofty, relaxed into melancholy submission. Then passing his arm into hers, and leaning on it as if sunk once more into the broken cripple needing her frail support, he drew her forth from the arbor, and paced the little garden slowly, painfully. At length he seemed to recover himself, and said in his ordinary cheerful tone, "But to the point in question, suppose we have done with acting and roaming, and keep to one name, and settle

somewhere like plain folks, again I ask—how shall we live?"

"I have been thinking of that," answered Sophy. "You remember that those good Miss Burtons taught me all kinds of needlework, and I know people can make money by needlework. And then, Grandy dear, what can't you do? Do you forget Mrs. Saunders' books that you bound, and her cups and saucers that you mended? So we would both work, and have a little cottage and a garden, that we could take care of, and sell the herbs and vegetables. Oh, I have thought over it all, the last fortnight, a hundred hundred times, only I did not dare to speak first."

Waife listened very attentively. "I can make very good baskets," said he, rubbing his chin, "famous baskets (if one could hire a bit of osier ground), and, as you say, there might be other fancy articles I could turn out prettily enough, and you could work samplers, and turn-rugs, and doyleys, and pin-cushions, and so forth; and what with a rood or two of garden-ground, and poultry (the Mayor says poultry is healthy for children), upon my word, if we could find a safe place, and people would not trouble us with their gossip—and we could save a little money for you when I am—"

"Bees too—honey?" interrupted Sophy, growing more and more interested and excited.

"Yes, bees—certainly. A cottage of that kind in a village would not be above £6 a-year, and £20 spent on materials for fancy-works would set us up. Ah! but furniture—beds and tables—monstrous dear!"

"O no, very little would do at first."

"Let us count the money we have left," said Waife, throwing himself down on a piece of sward that encircled a shady mulberry-tree. Old man and child counted the money, bit by bit, gaily yet anxiously—babbling, interrupting each other—scheme upon scheme; they forgot past and present as much as in acting plays—they were absorbed in the future—innocent simple future—innocent as the future planned by two infants fresh from Robinson Crusoe or fairy tales.

"I remember—I remember; just the place for us," cried Waife, suddenly. "It is many, many, many years since I was there; I was courting my Lizzy at the time—alas—alas! But no sad thoughts now!—just the place, near a large town, but in a pretty village quite retired from it. 'Twas there I learned to make baskets. I had broken my leg—fall from a horse—nothing to do. I lodged with an old basket-maker; he had a capital trade. Rivulet at the back of his house; reeds, osiers, plentiful. I see them now, as I saw them from my little casement while my leg was setting. And Lizzy used to write to me such dear letters; my baskets were all for her. We had baskets enough to have furnished a house with baskets; could have dined in baskets, sat in baskets, slept in baskets. With a few lessons I could soon recover the knack of the work. I should like to see the place again; it would be shaking hands with my youth once more. None who could possibly recognize me could be now living. Saw no one but the surgeon, the basket-maker, and his wife; all so old, they must be long since gathered to their fathers. Perhaps no one carries on the basket trade now. I may revive it and have it all to myself; perhaps the cottage itself may be easily hired."

Thus, ever disposed to be sanguine, the vagabond chattered on, Sophy listening fondly, and smiling up to his face. "And a fine large park close by; the owners, great lords, deserted it then; perhaps it is deserted still. You might wander over it as if it were your own, Sophy. Such wonderful trees—such green solitudes; and pretty shy hares running across the vistas—stately deer too! We will make friends with the lodge-keepers, and we will call the park yours, Sophy; and I shall be a genius who weaves magical baskets, and you shall be the enchanted princess concealed from all evil eyes, knitting doyleys of pearl under leaves of emerald, and catching no sound from the world of perishable life, except as the boughs whisper and the birds sing."

"Dear me, here you are—we thought you were lost," said the baliff's wife; "tea is waiting for you, and there's husband, sir, coming up from his work; he'll be proud and glad to know you, sir, and you too, my dear; we have no children of our own."

It is past eleven. Sophy, worn out, but with emotions far more pleasurable than she had long known, is fast asleep. Waife kneels by her side, looking at her. He touches her hand, so cool and soft—all fever gone; he

rises on tiptoe—he bends over her forehead—a kiss there, and a tear; he steals away, down, down the stairs. At the porch is the bailiff, holding Sir Isaac.

"We'll take all care of her," said Mr. Gooch. "You'll not know her again when you come back."

Waife pressed the hand of his grandchild's host, but did not speak.

"You are sure you will find your way—no, that's the wrong turn—straight on to the town. They'll be sitting up for you at the Saracen's Head, I suppose; of course, sir? It seems not hospitable like, your going away at the dead of night thus. But I understand you don't like crying, sir—we men don't; and your sweet little girl, I dare say, would sob, ready to break her heart, if she knew. Fine moonlight night, sir—straight on. And I say, don't fret about her: wife loves children dearly—so do I. Good night."

On went Waife—lamely, slowly—Sir Isaac's white coat gleaming in the moon, ghostlike. On he went, his bundle strapped across his shoulder, leaning on his staff, along by the folded sheep and the sleeping cattle. But when he got into the high-road, Gatesboro' full before him, with all its roofs and spires, he turned his back on the town, and tramped once more along the desert thoroughfare—more slowly, and more; more lamely—and more; till several milestones were passed; and then he crept through the gap of a hedgerow, to the sheltering eaves of a haystack; and under that roof-tree he and Sir Isaac lay down to rest.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Laugh at forebodings of evil, but tremble after day-dreams of happiness.

WAIFE left behind him at the cottage two letters—one intrusted to the bailiff, with a sealed bag, for Mr. Hartopp—one for Sophy, placed on a chair beside her bed.

The first letter was as follows,—

"I trust, dear and honored sir, that I shall come back safely; and when I do, I may have found perhaps a home for her, and some way of life such as you would not blame. But, in case of accident, I have left with Mr. Gooch, sealed up, the money we made at Gatesboro', after paying the inn bill, doctor, etc., and retaining the mere trifle I need in case I and Sir Isaac fail to support ourselves. You will kindly take care of it. I should not feel safe with more money about me, an old man. I might be robbed; besides, I am careless. I never can keep money; it slips out of my hands like an eel. Heaven bless you, sir; your kindness seems like a miracle vouchsafed to me for that child's dear sake. No evil can chance to her with you; and if I should fall ill and die, even then you, who would have aided the tricksome vagrant, will not grudge the saving hand to the harmless child."

The letter to Sophy ran thus,—

"Darling, forgive me; I have stolen away from you, but only for a few days, and only in order to see if we cannot gain the magic home where I am to be the Genius, and you the Princess. I go forth with such a light heart, Sophy dear. I shall be walking thirty miles a-day, and not feel an ache in the lame leg; you could not keep up with me—you know you could not. So think over the cottage and the basket-work, and practise at samplers and pin-cushions, when it is too hot to play; and be stout and strong against I come back. That, I trust, will be this day week—'tis but seven days; and then we will only act fairy dramas to nodding trees, with linnets for the orchestra; and even Sir Isaac shall not be demeaned by mercenary tricks, but shall employ his arithmetical talents in casting up the weekly bills, and he shall never stand on his hind-legs except on sunny days, when he shall carry a parasol to shade an enchanted princess. Laugh, darling—let me fancy I see you laughing; but don't fret—don't fancy I desert you. Do try and get well—quite, quite well; I ask it of you on my knees."

The letter and the bag were taken over at sunrise to Mr. Hartopp's villa. Mr. Hartopp was an early man. Sophy overslept herself; her room was to the west; the morning beams did not reach its windows; and the cottage without children woke up to labor, noiseless and still. So when at last she shook off sleep, and tossing her hair from her blue eyes, looked round and became conscious of the strange place, she still fancied the hour early. But she got up, drew the curtain from the window, saw the sun high in the heavens, and, ashamed of her laziness, turned, and lo! the letter on the chair! Her heart at once misgave her; the truth flashed upon a reason prematurely quick in the intuition which belongs to the union of sensitive affection and active thought. She drew a long breath, and turned deadly pale. It was some minutes before she could take up the letter, before she could break the seal. When she did, she read on noiselessly, her tears dropping over the page, without effort or sob. She had no egotistical sorrow, no grief in being left alone with strangers; it was the pathos of the old man's lonely wanderings, of his bereavement, of his counterfeit glee, and

genuine self-sacrifice—this it was that suffused her whole heart with unutterable yearnings of tenderness, gratitude, pity, veneration. But when she had wept silently for some time, she kissed the letter with devout passion, and turned to that Heaven to which the outcast had taught her first to pray.

Afterwards she stood still, musing a little while, and the sorrowful shade gradually left her face. Yes; she would obey him—she would not fret—she would try and get well and strong. He would feel, at the distance, that she was true to his wishes—that she was fitting herself to be again his companion;—seven days would soon pass. Hope, that can never long quit the heart of childhood, brightened over her meditations, as the morning sun over a landscape that just before had lain sad amidst twilight and under rains.

When she came down-stairs, Mrs. Gooch was pleased and surprised to observe the placid smile upon her face, and the quiet activity with which, after the morning meal, she moved about by the good woman's side, assisting her in her dairy-work and other housewife tasks, talking little, comprehending quickly—composed, cheerful.

"I am so glad to see you don't pine after your good grandpapa, as we feared you would."

"He told me not to pine," answered Sophy, simply, but with a quivering lip.

When the noon deepened, and it became too warm for exercise, Sophy timidly asked if Mrs. Gooch had any worsteds and knitting-needles, and being accommodated with those implements and materials, she withdrew to the arbor, and seated herself to work—solitary and tranquil.

What made, perhaps, the chief strength in this poor child's nature was its intense trustfulness—a part, perhaps, of its instinctive appreciation of truth. She trusted in Waife—in the future—in Providence—in her own childish, not helpless, self. Already, as her slight fingers sorted the worsteds, and her graceful taste shaded their hues into blended harmony, her mind was weaving, not less harmoniously, the hues in the woof of dreams: the cottage home—the harmless tasks—Waife, with his pipe, in the arm-chair, under some porch, covered, like that one yonder—why not?—with fragrant woodbine. And life, if humble, honest, truthful, not shrinking from the day, so that, if Lionel met her again, she should not blush, nor he be shocked.

And if their ways were so different as her grandfather said, still they might cross, as they had crossed before, and—the work slid from her hand—the sweet lips parted, smiling;—a picture came before her eyes—her grandfather, Lionel, herself; all three, friends, and happy; a stream, fair as the Thames had seemed—green trees all bathed in summer—the boat gliding by; in that boat they three, borne softly on—away—away—what matters whither?—by her side the old man;—facing her, the boy's bright, kind eyes. She started. She heard noises—a swinging gate—footsteps. She started—she rose—voices;—one strange to her—a man's voice,—then the Mayor's. A third voice—shrill, stern;—a terrible voice—heard in infancy—associated with images of cruelty, misery, woe. It could not be!—impossible! Near—nearer came the footsteps. Seized with the impulse of flight, she sprang to the mouth of the arbor. Fronting her, glared two dark, baleful eyes. She stood—arrested—spell-bound—as a bird fixed rigid by the gaze of a serpent.

"Yes, Mr. Mayor; all right!—it *is* our little girl—our dear Sophy. This way, Mr. Losely. Such a pleasant surprise for you. Sophy, my love!" said Mrs. Crane.

BOOK FOURTH.

CHAPTER I.

In the kindliest natures there is a certain sensitiveness, which, when wounded, occasions the same pain, and bequeathes the same resentment, as mortified vanity or galled self-love.

IT is exactly that day week, towards the hour of five in the evening, Mr. Hartopp, alone in the parlor behind his warehouse, is locking up his books and ledgers preparatory to the return to his villa. There is a certain change in the expression of his countenance since we saw it last. If it be possible for Mr. Hartopp to look sullen—sullen he looks; if it be possible for the Mayor of Gatesboro' to be crestfallen—crestfallen he is. That smooth existence has surely received some fatal concussion, and has not yet recovered the shock. But, if you will glance beyond the parlor at Mr. Williams giving orders in the warehouse, at the warehousemen themselves, at the rough faces in the tan-yard—nay, at Mike Callaghan, who has just brought a parcel from the railway, all of them have evidently shared in the effects of the concussion; all of them wear a look more or less sullen; all seem crestfallen. Nay, could you carry your gaze farther on—could you peep into the shops in the High Street, or at the loungers in the city reading-room; could you extend the vision farther still—to Mr. Hartopp's villa, behold his wife, his little ones, his men-servants, and his maid-servants—more and more impressively general would become the tokens of disturbance occasioned by that infamous concussion. Everywhere a sullen look—everywhere that ineffable aspect of crestfallenness! What can have happened? is the good man bankrupt? No—rich as ever! What can it be? Reader! that fatal event which they who love Josiah Hartopp are ever at watch to prevent, despite all their vigilance, has occurred! Josiah Hartopp has been TAKEN IN! Other men may be occasionally taken in, and no one mourns—perhaps they deserve it! they are not especially benevolent, or they set up to be especially wise. But to take in that Lamb! And it was not only the Mayor's heart that was wounded, but his pride, his self-esteem, his sense of dignity, were terribly humiliated. For as we know, though all the world considered Mr. Hartopp the very man born to be taken in, and therefore combined to protect him, yet in his secret soul Mr. Hartopp considered that no man less needed such protection; that he was never taken in, unless he meant to be so.

Thus the cruelty and ingratitude of the base action under which his crest was so fallen, jarred on his whole system. Nay, more, he could not but feel that the event would long affect his personal comfort and independence; he would be more than ever under the affectionate tyranny of Mr. Williams—more than ever be an object of universal surveillance and espionage. There would be one thought paramount throughout Gatesboro'. "The Mayor, God bless him! has been taken in—this must not occur again! or Gatesboro' is dishonored, and Virtue indeed a name!" Mr. Hartopp felt not only mortified but subjugated—he who had hitherto been the soft subjugator of the hardest. He felt not only subjugated, but indignant at the consciousness of being so. He was too meekly convinced of Heaven's unerring justice not to feel assured that the man who had taken him in would come to a tragic end. He would not have hanged that man with his own hands—he was too mild for vengeance. But if he had seen that man hanging, he would have said piously, "Fitting retribution," and passed on his way soothed and comforted. Taken in!—taken in at last!—he, Josiah Hartopp, taken in by a fellow with one eye!

WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?

CHAPTER II.

The Mayor is so protected that he cannot help himself.

A COMMOTION without—a kind of howl—a kind of hoot. Mr. Williams—the warehousemen, the tanners, Mike Callaghan, share between them the howl and the hoot. The Mayor started—is it possible! His door is burst open, und, scattering all who sought to hold him back—scattering them to the right and left from his massive torso, in rushed the man who had taken in the Mayor—the fellow with one eye, and with that fellow, shaggy and travel-soiled, the other dog!

"What have you done with the charge I intrusted to you? My child—my child—where is she?"

Waife's face was wild with the agony of his emotions, and his voice was so sharply terrible that it went like a knife into the heart of the men, who, thrust aside for the moment, now followed him, fearful, into the room.

"Mr.—Mr. Chapman, sir," faltered the Mayor, striving hard to recover dignity and self-possession, "I am astonished at your—your—"

"Audacity!" interposed Mr. Williams.

"My child—my Sophy—my child! answer me, man!"

"Sir," said the Mayor, drawing himself up, "have you not got the note which I left at my bailiff's cottage in case you called there?"

"Your note—this thing!" said Waife, striking a crumpled paper with his hand, and running his eye over its contents. "You have rendered up, you say, the child to her lawful protector? Gracious heavens! did *I* trust her to you, or not?"

"Leave the room all of you," said the Mayor, with a sudden return of his usual calm vigor.

"You go—you, sirs; what the deuce do you do here?" growled Williams to the meaner throng. "Out!—I stay; never fear, men, I'll take care of him!"

The bystanders surlily slinked off, but none returned to their work; they stood within reach of call by the shut door. Williams tucked up his coat-sleeves, clenched his fists, hung his head doggedly on one side, and looked altogether so pugnacious and minatory, that Sir Isaac, who, though in a state of great excitement, had hitherto retained self-control, peered at him under his curls, stiffened his back, showed his teeth, and growled formidably.

"My good Williams, leave us," said the Mayor; "I would be alone with this person."

"Alone—you! out of the question. Now you have been once taken in, and you own it—it is my duty to protect you henceforth; and I will to the end of my days."

The Mayor sighed heavily—"Well, Williams, well!—take a chair, and be quiet. Now, Mr. Chapman, so to call you still; you have deceived me."

"I—how?"

The Mayor was puzzled. "Deceived me," he said at last, "in my knowledge of human nature. I thought you an honest man, sir. And you are—but no matter."

WAIFE (impatiently).—"My child, my child! you have given her up to—to—"

MAYOR.—"Her own father, sir."

WAIFE (echoing the words as he staggers back).—"I thought so—I thought it!"

MAYOR.—"In so doing I obeyed the law—he had legal power to enforce his demand." The Mayor's voice was almost apologetic in its tone, for he was affected by Waife's anguish, and not able to silence a pang of remorse. After all, he had been trusted; and he had, excusably perhaps, necessarily perhaps, but still he *had* failed to fulfil the trust. "But," added the Mayor, as if re-assuring himself—"but I refused at first to give her up, even to her own father; at first insisted upon waiting till your return; and it was only when I was informed what you yourself were, that my scruples gave way."

Waife remained long silent, breathing very hard, passing his hand several times over his forehead; at last he said more quietly than he had yet spoken—"Will you tell me where they have gone?"

"I do not know; and if I did know, I would not tell you! Are they not right when they say that that innocent child should not be tempted away by—by—a—in short by you, sir?"

"*They* said! Her father—said that!—he said that! Did he—did *he* say it? Had he the heart?"

MAYOR.—"No, I don't think he said it. Eh, Mr. Williams? He spoke little to me!"

MR. WILLIAMS.—"Of course he would not expose that person. But the woman—the lady, I mean."

WAIFE.—"Woman! Ah, yes. The bailiff's wife said there was a woman. What woman? What's her name?"

MAYOR.—"Really you must excuse me. I can say no more. I have consented to see you thus, because whatever you might have been, or may be, still it was due to myself to explain how I came to give up the child; and, besides, you left money with me, and *that*, at least, I can give to your own hand."

The Mayor turned to his desk, unlocked it, and drew forth the bag which Waife had sent to him.

As he extended it towards the Comedian, his hand trembled and his cheek flushed. For Waife's one bright eye had in it such depth of reproach, that again the Mayor's conscience was sorely troubled, and he would have given ten times the contents of that bag to have been alone with the vagrant, and to have said the soothing things he did not dare to say before Williams, who sate there mute and grim, guarding him from being once more "taken in." "If you had confided in me at first, Mr. Chapman," he said, pathetically, "or even if now, I could aid you in an honest way of life!"

"Aid him—now!" said Williams, with a snort. "At it again! you're not a man, you're an angel!"

"But if he is penitent, Williams."

"So! so! so!" murmured Waife. "Thank Heaven it was not he who spoke against me—but it was a strange woman. Oh!" he suddenly broke off with a groan. "Oh—but that strange woman—who, what can she be? and Sophy with her and him. Distraction! Yes, yes, I take the money. I shall want it all. Sir Isaac, pick up that bag. Gentleman, good-day to you!" He bowed; such a failure that bow! Nothing ducal in it! bowed and turned towards the door; then, when he gained the threshold, as if some meeker, holier thought restored to him dignity of bearing, his form rose, though his face softened, and stretching his right hand towards the Mayor, he said:—"You did but as all perhaps would have done on the evidence before you. You meant to be kind to her. If you knew all, how you would repent! I do not blame—I forgive you."

He was gone: the Mayor stood transfixed. Even Williams felt a cold comfortless thrill. "He does not look like it," said the foreman. "Cheer up, sir, no wonder you were taken in—who would not have been?"

"Hark! that hoot again. Go, Williams, don't let the men insult him. Go, do—I shall be grateful."

But before Williams got to the door, the cripple and his dog had vanished; vanished down a dark narrow alley on the opposite side of the street. The rude workmen had followed him to the mouth of the alley, mocking him. Of the exact charge against the Comedian's good name they were not informed; that knowledge was confined to the Mayor and Mr. Williams. But the latter had dropped such harsh expressions, that bad as the charge might really be, all in Mr. Hartopp's employment probably deemed it worse, if possible, than it really was. And wretch indeed must be the man by whom the Mayor had been confessedly taken in, and whom the Mayor had indignantly given up to the reproaches of his own conscience. But the cripple was now out of sight, lost amidst those labyrinths of squalid homes which, in great towns, are thrust beyond view, branching off abruptly behind High Streets and Market Places, so that strangers passing only along the broad thoroughfares, with glittering shops and gas-lit causeways,—exclaim, "Where do the Poor live?"

CHAPTER III.

Ecce iterum Crispinus!

IT was by no calculation, but by involuntary impulse, that Waife, thus escaping from the harsh looks and taunting murmurs of the gossips round the Mayor's door, dived into those sordid devious lanes. Vaguely he felt that a ban was upon him; that the covering he had thrown over his brand of outcast was lifted up; that a sentence of expulsion from the High Streets and Market Places of decorous life was passed against him. He had been robbed of his child, and Society, speaking in the voice of the Mayor of Gatesboro', said "Rightly! thou art not fit companion for the innocent!"

At length he found himself out of the town, beyond its straggling suburbs, and once more

on the solitary road. He had already walked far that day. He was thoroughly exhausted. He sate himself down in a dry ditch by the hedgerow, and taking his head between his hands, strove to re-collect his thoughts, and re-arrange his plans.

Waife had returned that day to the bailiff's cottage joyous and elated. He had spent the week in travelling—partly, though not all the way, on foot, to the distant village, in which he had learned in youth the basket-maker's art! He had found the very cottage wherein he had then lodged, vacant, and to be let. There seemed a ready opening for the humble but pleasant craft to which he had diverted his ambition.

The bailiff intrusted with the letting of the cottage and osier-ground, had, it is true, requested some reference—not, of course, as to all a tenant's antecedents, but as to the reasonable probability that the tenant would be a quiet, sober man, who would pay his rent, and abstain from poaching. Waife thought he might safely presume that the Mayor of Gatesboro' would not, so far as that went, object to take his past upon trust, and give him a good word towards securing so harmless and obscure a future. Waife had never before asked such a favor of any man; he shrunk from doing so now; but for his grandchild's sake, he would waive his scruples or humble his pride.

Thus, then, he had come back, full of Elysian dreams, to his Sophy—his Enchanted Princess. Gone—taken away, and with the Mayor's consent—the consent of the very man upon whom he had been relying to secure a livelihood and a shelter! Little more had he learned at the cottage, for Mr. and Mrs. Gooch had been cautioned to be as brief as possible, and give him no clue to regain his lost treasure, beyond the note which informed him it was with a lawful possessor. And, indeed, the worthy pair were now prejudiced against the vagrant, and were rude to him.

But he had not tarried to cross-examine and inquire. He had rushed at once to the Mayor. Sophy was with one whose legal right to dispose of her he could not question. But where that person would take her—where he resided—what he would do with her—he had no means to conjecture. Most probably (he thought and guessed) she would be carried abroad—was already out of the country. But the woman with Losely, he had not heard her described; his guesses did not turn towards Mrs. Crane; the woman was evidently hostile to him—it was the woman who had spoken against him—not Losely; the woman whose tongue had poisoned Hartopp's mind, and turned into scorn all that admiring respect which had before greeted the great Comedian. Why was that woman his enemy? Who could she be? What had she to do with Sophy? He was half beside himself with terror. It was to save her less even from Losely than from such direful women as Losely made his confidants and associates, that Waife had taken Sophy to himself.

As for Mrs. Crane, she had never seemed a foe to *him*—she had ceded the child to him willingly—he had no reason to believe, from the way in whlch she had spoken of Losley when he last saw her, that she could henceforth aid the interests, or share the schemes, of the man whose perfidies she then denounced; and as to Rugge, he had not appeared at Gatesboro'. Mrs. Crane had prudently suggested that his presence would not be proptiatory or discreet, and that all reference to him, or to the contract with him, should be suppressed. Thus Waife was wholly without one guiding evidence—one groundwork for conjecture—that might enable him to track the lost; all he knew was, that she had been given up to a man whose whereabouts it was difficult to discover—a vagrant, of life darker and more hidden than his own.

But how had the hunters discovered the place where he had treasured up his Sophy—how dogged that retreat? Perhaps from the village in which we first saw him. Ay, doubtless, learned from Mrs. Saunders of the dog he had purchased, and the dog would have served to direct them on his path. At that thought he pushed away Sir Isaac, who had been resting his head on the old man's knee—pushed him away angrily; the poor dog slunk off in sorrowful surprise, and whined.

"Ungrateful wretch that I am!" cried Waife, and he opened his arms to the brute, who bounded forgivingly to his breast.

"Come, come, we will go back to the village in Surrey. Tramp, tramp!" said the cripple, rousing himself. And at that moment, just as he gained his feet, a friendly hand was laid on his shoulder, and a friendly voice said :

"I have found you! the crystal said so! marbellous!"

"Merle," faltered out the vagrant—"Merle, you here! Oh, perhaps you come to tell me good news: you have seen Sophy—you know where she is!"

The Cobbler shook his head. "Can't see her just at present. Crystal says nout about her. But I know she was taken from you—and—and—you shake tremenjous! Lean on me, Mr. Waife, and call off that big animal. He's suspicating my calves and circumtitty-vating them. Thank ye, sir. You see I was born with sinister aspects in my Twelfth House, which appertains to big animals and enemies;—and dogs of that size about one's calves are—malefics!"

As Merle now slowly led the cripple, and Sir Isaac, relinquishing his first suspicions, walked droopingly beside them, the Cobbler began a long story, much encumbered by astrological illustrations and moralizing comments. The substance of his narrative is thus epitomized: Rugge, in pursuing Waife's track, had naturally called on Merle in company with Losely and Mrs. Crane. The Cobbler had no clue to give, and no mind to give it, if clue he had possessed. But his curiosity being roused, he had smothered the inclination to dismiss the inquirers with more speed than good-breeding, and even refreshed his slight acquaintance with Mr. Rugge in so well simulated a courtesy, that that gentleman, when left behind by Losely and Mrs. Crane in their journey to Gatesboro', condescended, for want of other company, to drink tea with Mr. Merle; and tea being succeeded by stronger potations, he fairly unbosomed himself of his hopes of recovering Sophy, and his ambition of hiring the York theatre.

The day afterwards Rugge went away seemingly in high spirits, and the Cobbler had no doubt, from some words he let fall in passing Merle's stall towards the railway, that Sophy was recaptured, and that Rugge was summoned to take possession of her. Ascertaining from the manager that Losely and Mrs. Crane had gone to Gatesboro', the Cobbler called to mind that he had a sister living there, married to a greengrocer in a very small way, whom he had not seen for many years; and finding his business slack just then, he resolved to pay this relative a visit, with the benevolent intention of looking up Waife, whom he expected, from Rugge's account, to find there, and offering him any consolation or aid in his power, should Sophy have been taken from him against his will. A consultation with his crystal, which showed him the face of Mr. Waife alone, and much dejected, and a horary scheme which promised success to his journey, decided his movements. He had arrived at Gatesboro' the day before, had heard a confused story about a Mr. Chapman, with his dog and his child, whom the Mayor had first taken up, but who afterwards, in some mysterious manner, had taken in the Mayor.

Happily, the darker gossip in the High Street had not penetrated the back lane in which Merle's sister resided. There, little more was known than the fact that this mysterious stranger had imposed on the wisdom of Gatesboro's learned Institute and enlightened Mayor. Merle, at no loss to identify Waife with Chapman, could only suppose that he had been discovered to be a strolling player in Rugge's exhibition, after pretending to be some much greater man. Such an offence the Cobbler was not disposed to consider heinous. But Mr. Chapman was gone from Gatesboro' none knew whither; and Merle had not yet ventured to call himself on the chief magistrate of the place, to inquire after a man by whom that august personage had been deceived. "Howsomever," quoth Merle, in conclusion, "I was just standing at my sister's door, with her last babby in my arms, is Scrob Lane, when I saw you pass by like a shot. You were gone while I ran in to give up the babby, who is teething, with malefics in square—gone—clean out of sight. You took one turn, I took another; but you see we meet at last, as good men always do in this world—or the other, which is the same thing in the long-run."

Waife, who had listened to his friend without other interruption than an occasional nod of the head or interjectional expletive, was now restored to much of his constitutional mood of sanguine cheerfulness. He recognized Mrs. Crane in the woman described, and if surprised, he was rejoiced. For much as he disliked that gentlewoman, he thought Sophy might be in worse female hands. Without much need of sagacity, he divined the gist of the truth. Losely had somehow or other

became acquainted with Rugge, and sold Sophy to the manager. Where Rugge was, there would Sophy be. It could not be very difficult to find out the place in which Rugge was now exhibiting; and then—ah then! Waife whistled to Sir Isaac, tapped his forehead, and smiled triumphantly. Meanwhile the Cobbler had led him back into the suburb, with the kind intention of offering him food and bed for the night at his sister's house. But Waife had already formed his plan; in London, and in London alone, could he be sure to learn where Rugge was now exhibiting; in London there were places at which that information could be gleaned at once. The last train to the metropolis was not gone. He would slink round the town to the station: he and Sir Isaac at that hour might secure places unnoticed.

When Merle found it was in vain to press him to stay over the night, the good-hearted Cobbler accompanied him to the train, and, while waife shrunk into a dark corner, bought the tickets for dog and master. As he was paying for these, he overheard two citizens talking of Mr. Chapman. It was indeed Mr. Williams explaining to a fellow-burgess just returned to Gatesboro', after a week's absence, how and by what manner of man Mr. Hartopp had been taken in. At what Williams said, the Cobbler's cheek paled. When he joined the Comedian, his manner was greatly altered; he gave the tickets without speaking, but looked hard into Waife's face, as the latter repaid him the fares. "No," said the Cobbler suddenly, "I don't believe it."

"Believe what?" asked Waife, startled.

"That you are——"

The Cobbler paused, bent forward, and whispered the rest of the sentence close in the vagrant's ear. Waife's head fell on his bosom, but he made no answer.

"Speak," cried Merle; "say 'tis a lie." The poor cripples's lip writhed, but he still spoke not.

Merlie looked aghast at that obstinate silence. At length, but very slowly, as the warning bell summoned him and Sir Isaac to their several places in the train, Waife found voice. "So you too, you too desert and despise me! God's will be done!" He moved away—spiritless, limping, hiding his face as well as he could. The porter took the dog from him, to thrust it into one of the boxes reserved for such four-footed passengers.

Waife thus parted from his last friend—I mean the dog—looked after Sir Isaac wistfully, and crept iuto a third-class carriage, in which luckily there was no one else. Suddenly Merle jumped in, snatched his hand, and pressed it tightly. "I don't despise, I don't turn my back on you; whenever you and the little one want a home and a friend, come to Kit Merle as before, and I'll bite my tongue out if I ask any more questions of you; I'll ask the stars instead."

The Cobbler had but just time to splutter out these comforting words, and redescend the carriage, when the train put itself into movement, and the life-like iron miracle, fuming, hissing, and screeching, bore off to London its motley convoy of human beings, each passenger's heart a mystery to the other, all bound the same road, all wedged close within the same whirling mechanism; what a separate and distinct world in each! Such is Civilization! How like we are one to the other in the mass! how strangely dissimilar in the abstract.

CHAPTER IV.

"If," says a great thinker (DEGERANDO, *Du Perfectionnement Moral*, chapter ix., "On the Difficulties we encounter in Self Study")—"If one concentrates reflection too much on oneself, one ends by no longer seeing anything, or seeing only what one wishes. By the very act, as it were, of capturing oneself, the personage we believe we have seized, escapes, disappears. Nor is it only the complexity of our inner being which obstructs our examination, but its exceeding variability. The investigator's regard should embrace all the sides of the subject, and perseveringly pursue all its phases."

IT is the race-week in Humberston, a county town far from Gatesboro', and in the north of England. The races last three days; the first day is over; it has been a brilliant spectacle; the course crowded with the carriages of provincial magnates, with equestrian betters of note from the metropolis; blacklegs in great muster; there have been gaming-booths on the ground, and gypsies telling fortunes; much champagne imbibed by the well-bred, much soda-water and brandy by the vulgar. Thousands and tens of thousands have been lost and won; some paupers have

been for the time enriched; some rich men made poor for life. Horses have won fame; some of their owners lost character. Din and uproar, and coarse oaths, and rude passions—all have had their hour. The amateurs of the higher classes have gone back to dignified country-houses, as courteous hosts or favored guests. The professional speculators of a lower grade have poured back into the county town, and inns and taverns are crowded. Drink is hotly called for at reeking bars; waiters and chambermaids pass to and fro, with dishes, and tankards, and bottles in their hands. All is noise and bustle, and eating and swilling, and disputation and slang, wild glee, and wilder despair, amongst those who come back from the race-course to the inns in the county town.

At one of these taverns, neither the best nor the worst, and in a small narrow slice of a room that seemed robbed from the landing-place, sate Mrs. Crane, in her iron-grey silk gown. She was seated close by the open window, as carriages, chaises, flies, carts, vans, and horsemen succeeded each other thick and fast, watching the scene with a soured, scornful look. For human joy, as for human grief, she had little sympathy. Life had no Saturnalian holidays left for her. Some memory in her past had poisoned the well-springs of her social being. Hopes and objects she had still, but out of the wrecks of the natural and healthful existence of womanhood, those objects and hopes stood forth, exaggerated, intense, as are the ruling passions in monomania. A bad woman is popularly said to be worse than a wicked man.

If so, partly because women, being more solitary, brood more unceasingly over cherished ideas, whether good or evil; partly also, for the same reason that makes a wicked gentleman, who has lost caste and character, more irreclaimable than a wicked clown, low-born and low-bred—viz., that in proportion to the loss of shame is the gain in recklessness; but principally, perhaps, because in extreme wickedness there is necessarily a distortion of the reasoning faculty; and man, accustomed from the cradle rather to reason than to feel, has that faculty more firm against abrupt twists and lesions than it is in woman; where virtue may have left him, logic may still linger; and he may decline to push evil to a point at which it is clear to his understanding that profit vanishes and punishment rests; while woman, once abandoned to ill, finds sufficient charm in its mere excitement; and, regardless of consequences where the man asks, "Can I?" raves out, "I will!" Thus man may be criminal through cupidity, vanity, love, jealousy, fear, ambition; rarely in civilized, that is, reasoning life, through hate and revenge; for hate is a profitless investment, and revenge a ruinous speculation.

But when women are thoroughly depraved and hardened, nine times out of ten it is hatred or revenge that makes them so. Arabella Crane had not, however, attained to that last state of wickedness, which, consistent in evil, is callous to remorse; she was not yet unsexed. In her nature was still that essence, "varying and mutable," which distinguishes woman while womanhood is left to her. And now, as she sate gazing on the throng below, her haggard mind recoiled perhaps from the conscious shadow of the Evil Principle which, invoked as an ally, remains as a destroyer. Her dark front relaxed; she moved in her seat uneasily. "Must it be always thus!" she muttered—"always this hell here! Even now, if in one large pardon I could include the undoer, the earth, myself, and again be human—human, even as those slight triflers or coarse brawlers that pass yonder! Oh for something in common with common life!"

Her lips closed, and her eyes again fell upon the crowded street. At that moment three or four heavy vans or wagons filled with operatives or laborers and their wives, coming back from the race-course, obstructed the way; two outridess with satin jackets were expostulating, cracking their whips, and seeking to clear space for an open carriage with four thoroughbred impatient horses. Towards that carriage every gazer from the windows were directing eager eyes; each foot-passenger from the pavement lifted his hat—evidently in that carriage some great person! Like all who are at war with the world as it is, Arabella Crane abhorred the great, and despised the small for worshipping the great. But still her own fierce dark eyes mechanically followed those of the vulgar. The carriage bore a marquess's coronet on its panels, and was filled with ladies; two other carriages bearing a similar coronet, and

evidently belonging to the same party, were in the rear. Mrs. Crane started.

In that first carriage, as it now slowly moved under her very window, and paused a minute or more till the obstructing vehicles in front were marshalled into order—there flashed upon her eyes a face radiant with female beauty in its most glorious prime. Amongst the crowd at that moment was a blind man, adding to the various discords of the street by a miserable hurdy-gurdy. In the movement of the throng to get nearer to a sight of the ladies in the carriage, this poor creature was thrown forward; the dog that led him an ugly brute, on his own account or his master's, took fright, broke from the string, and ran under the horses' hoofs, snarling. The horses became restive; the blind man made a plunge after his dog, and was all but run over. The lady in the first carriage, alarmed for his safety, rose up from her seat, and made her outriders dismount, lead away the poor blind man, and restore to him his dog. Thus engaged, her face shone full upon Arabella Crane; and with that face rushed a tide of earlier memories. Long, very long, since she had seen that face,—seen it in those years when she herself, Arabella Crane, was young and handsome.

The poor man—who seemed not to realize the idea of the danger he had escaped—once more safe, the lady resumed her seat; and now that the momentary animation of humane fear and womanly compassion passed from her countenance, its expression altered; it took the calm, almost the coldness, of a Greek statue. But with the calm there was a listless melancholy which Greek sculpture never gives to the Parian stone; stone cannot convey that melancholy—it is the shadow which needs for its substance a living, mortal heart.

Crack went the whips: the horses bounded on—the equipage rolled fast down the street, followed by its satellites. "Well!" said a voice in the street below, "I never saw Lady Montfort in such beauty. Ah, here comes my lord!"

Mrs. Crane heard and looked forth again. A dozen or more gentlemen on horseback rode slowly up the street; which of these was Lord Montfort?—not difficult to distinguish. As the bystanders lifted their hats to the cavalcade, the horsemen generally returned the salutation by simply touching their own—one horseman uncovered wholly. That one must be the Marquess, the greatest man in those parts, with lands stretching away on either side that town for miles and miles—a territory which, in feudal times, might have alarmed a king. He, the civilest, must be the greatest. A man still young, decidedly good-looking, wonderfully well-dressed, wonderfully well-mounted, the careless ease of high rank in his air and gesture. To the superficial gaze, just what the great Lord of Montfort should be. Look again! In that fair face is there not something that puts you in mind of a florid period which contains a feeble platitude?—something in its very prettiness that betrays a weak nature, and a sterile mind?

The cavalcade passed away—the vans and the wagons again usurped the thoroughfare. Arabella Crane left the window, and approached the little looking-glass over the mantel-piece. She gazed upon her own face bitterly—she was comparing it with the features of the dazzling Marchioness.

The door was flung open, and Jasper Losely sauntered in, whistling a French air, and flapping the dust from his boots with his kid glove.

"All right," said he, gaily. "A famous day of it!"

"You have won," said Mrs. Crane, in a tone rather of disappointment than congratulation.

"Yes. That £100 of Rugge's has been the making of me. I only wanted a capital just to start with!" He flung himself into a chair, opened his pocket-book, and scrutinized its contents. "Guess," said he suddenly, "on whose horse I won these two *rouleaux?* Lord Montfort's! Ay, and I saw my lady!"

"So did I see her from this window. She did not look happy!"

"Not happy!—with such an equipage! neatest turn-out I ever set eyes on; not happy, indeed! I had half a mind to ride up to her carriage and advance a claim to her gratitude."

"Gratitude? Oh, for your part in that miserable affair of which you told me?"

"Not a miserable affair for her—but certainly *I* never got any good from it. Trouble for nothing! *Basta.* No use looking back."

"No use; but who can help it!" said Arabella Crane, sighing heavily; then, as if eager to change the subject, she added abruptly,

"Mr. Rugge has been here twice this morning, highly excited—the child will not act. He says you are bound to make her do so!"

"Nonsense. That is his look-out. *I* see after children, indeed!"

MRS. CRANE (with a visible effort).—"Listen to me, Jasper Losely. I have no reason to love that child, as you may suppose. But now that you so desert he, I think I feel compassion for her; and when, this morning, I raised my hand to strike her for her stubborn spirit, and saw her eyes unflinching, and her pale, pale, but fearless face, my arm fell to my side powerless. She will not take to this life without the old man. She will waste away and die."

LOSLEY.—"How you bother me! Are you serious? What am I to do?"

MRS. CRANE.—"You have won money, you say; revoke the contract; pay Rugge back his £100.—He is disappointed in his bargain; he will take the money."

LOSLEY.—"I daresay he will, indeed. No—I have won to-day, it is true, but I may lose to-morrow, and, besides, I am in want of so many things; when one gets a little money, one has an immediate necessity for more—ha! ha! Still I would not have the child die; and she may grow up to be of use. I tell you what I will do; if, when the races are over, I find I have gained enough to afford it, I will see about buying her off. But £100 is too much! Rugge ought to take half the money, or a quarter, because, if she don't act, I suppose she does eat."

Odious as the man's words were, he said them with a laugh that seemed to render them less revolting—the laugh of a very handsome mouth, showing teeth still brilliantly white. More comely than usual that day, for he was in great good-humor, it was difficult to conceive that a man with so healthful and fair an exterior was really quite rotten at heart.

"Your own young laugh," said Arabella Crane, almost tenderly. "I know not how it is, but this day I feel as if I were less old—altered though I be in face and mind. I have allowed myself to pity that child; while I speak, I can pity you. Yes! pity—when I think of what you were. Must you go on thus? To what! Jasper Losely," she continued, sharply, eagerly, clasping her hands—"hear me—I have an income, not large, it is true, but assured; you have nothing but what, as you say, you may lose to-morrow; share my income! Fulfil your solemn promises—marry me. I will forget whose daughter that girl is—I will be a mother to her. And for yourself, give me the right to feel for you again as I once did, and I may find a way to raise you yet—higher than you can raise yourself. I have some wit, Jasper, as you know. At the worst you shall have the pastime, I the toil. In your illness I will nurse you; in your joys I will intrude no share. Whom else can you marry? to whom else could you confide? who else could—"

She stopped short as if an adder had strung her, uttering a shriek of rage, of pain; for Jasper Losely, who had hitherto listened to her, stupefied, astounded, here burst into a fit of merriment, in which there was such undisguised contempt, such an enjoyment of the ludicrous provoked by the idea of the marriage pressed upon him, that the insult pierced the woman to her very soul.

Continuing his laugh, despite that cry of wrathful agony it had caused, Jasper rose, holding his sides, and surveying himself in the glass, with very different feelings at the sight from those that had made his companion's gaze there a few minutes before so mournful.

"My dear good friend," he said, composing himself at last, and wiping his eyes, "excuse me, but really when you said whom else could I marry—ha! ha!—it did seem such a capital joke! Marry you, my fair Crane! No—put that idea out of your head—we know each other too well for conjugal felicity. You love me now; you always did, and always will—that is, while we are not tied to each other. Women who once love me, always love me—can't help themselves. I am sure I don't know why, except that I am what they call a villain! Ha! the clock striking seven—I dine with a set of fellows I have picked up on the race-ground; they don't know me, nor I them; we shall be better acquainted after the third bottle. Cheer up, Crane; go and scold Sophy, and make her act if you can; if not, scold Rugge into letting her alone. Scold somebody—nothing like it, to keep other folks quiet, and oneself busy. Adieu! and pray, no more matrimonial solicitations—they frighten me! Gad," added Losely, as

he banged the door, "such overtures would frighten Old Nick himself!"

Did Arabella Crane hear those last words—or had she not heard enough? If Losely had turned and beheld her face, would it have startled back his trivial laugh? Possibly; but it would have caused only a momentarily uneasiness. If Alecto himself had reared over him her brow horrent with vipers, Jasper Losely would have thought he had only to look handsome and say coaxingly, "Alecto, my dear," and the Fury would have pawned her head-dress to pay his washing-bill.

After all, in the face of the grim woman he had thus so wantonly incensed, there was not so much menace as resolve. And that resolve was yet more shown in the movement of the hands than in the aspect of the countenance: those hands,—lean, firm, nervous hands,—slowly expanded; then as slowly clenched, as if her own thought had taken substance, and she was locking it in a clasp—tightly, tightly—never to be loosened till the pulse was still.

CHAPTER V.

The most submissive where they love may be the most stubborn where they do not love—Sophy is stubborn to Mr. Rugge—That injured man summons to his side Mrs. Crane, imitating the policy of those potentates who would retrieve the failures of force by the successes of diplomacy.

Mr. Rugge has obtained his object. But now comes the question, "What will he do with it?" Question with as many heads as the Hydra; and no sooner does an Author dispose of one head than up springs another.

Sophy has been bought and paid for—she is now, legally, Mr. Rugge's property. But there was a wise peer who once bought Punch—Punch became his property, and was brought in triumph to his lordship's house. To my lord's great dismay, Punch would not talk. To Rugge's great dismay, Sophy would not act.

Rendered up to Jasper Losely and Mrs. Crane, they had not lost an hour in removing her from Gatesboro' and its neighborhood. They did not, however, go back to the village which they had left Rugge, but returned straight to London, and wrote to the manager to join them there.

Sophy, once captured, seemed stupefied; she evinced no noisy passion—she made no violent resistance. When she was told to love and obey a father in Jasper Losely, she lifted her eyes to his face—then turned them away, and shook her head, mute and incredulous. That man her father! she did not believe it. Indeed, Jasper took no pains to convince her of the relationship, or win her attachment. He was not unkindly rough—he seemed wholly indifferent—probably he was so. For the ruling vice of the man was in his egotism. It was not so much that he had bad principles and bad feelings, as that he had no principles and no feelings at all, except as they began, continued, and ended in that system of centralization, which not more paralyzes healthful action in a state, than it does in the individual man. Self-indulgence with him was absolute. He was not without power or keen calculation, not without much cunning. He could conceive a project for some gain far off in the future, and concoct, for its realization, schemes subtly woven, astutely guarded. But he could not secure their success by any long-sustained sacrifices of the caprice of one hour or the indolence of the next. If it had been a great object to him for life to win Sophy's filial affection, he would not have bored himself for five minutes each day to gain that object. Besides, he had just enough of shame to render him uneasy at the sight of the child he had deliberately sold. So, after chucking her under the chin, and telling her to be a good girl and be grateful for all that Mrs. Crane had done for her, and meant still to do, he consigned her almost solely to that lady's care.

When Rugge arrived, and Sophy was informed of her intended destination, she broke silence—her color went and came quickly—she declared, folding her arms upon her breast, that she would never act if separated from her grandfather. Mrs. Crane, struck by her manner, suggested to Rugge that it might be as well, now that she was legally secured to the manager, to humor her wish, and re-engage Waife. Whatever the tale with which, in order to obtain Sophy from the Mayor, she had turned that worthy magistrate's mind against the Comedian, she had not gratified Mr. Rugge by a similar confidence to him. To him she

said nothing which might operate against renewing engagements with Waife, if he were so disposed. But Rugge had no faith in a child's firmness, and he had a strong spite against Waife, so he obstinately refused. He insisted, however, as a peremptory condition of the bargain, that Mr. Losely and Mrs. Crane should accompany him to the town to which he had transferred his troop, both in order by their presence to confirm his authority over Sophy, and to sanction his claim to her, should Waife reappear and dispute it.

For Rugge's profession being scarcely legitimate, and decidedly equivocal, his right to bring up a female child to the same calling might be called into question before a magistrate, and necessitate the production of her father in order to substantiate the special contract. In return, the manager handsomely offered to Mr. Losley and Mrs. Crane to pay their expenses in the excursion—a liberality haughtily rejected by Mrs. Crane for herself, though she agreed at her own charge to accompany Losely if he decided on complying with the manager's request. Losely at first raised objections, but hearing that there would be races in the neighborhood, and having a peculiar passion for betting and all kinds of gambling, as well as an ardent desire to enjoy his £100 in so fashionable a manner, he consented to delay his return to the Continent, and attend Arabella Crane to the provincial Elis. Rugge carried off Sophy to her fellow "orphans."

And Sophy would not act!

In vain she was coaxed—in vain she was threatened—in vain she was deprived of food—in vain shut up in a dark hole—in vain was the lash held over her. Rugge, tyrant though he was, did not suffer the lash to fall. His self-restraint there might be humanity—might be fear of the consequences. For the state of her health began to alarm him—she might die—there might be an inquest. He wished now that he had taken Mrs. Crane's suggestion, and re-engaged Waife. But where *was* Waife? Meanwhile he had advertised the Young Phenomenon; placarded the walls with the name of Juliet Araminta; got up the piece of the Remorseless Baron, with a new rock-scene. As Waife had had nothing to say in that drama, so any one could act his part.

The first performance was announced for that night—there would be such an audience—the best seats even now pre-engaged—first night of the race-week. The clock had struck seven—the performance began at eight. And Sophy would not act!

The child was seated in a space that served for the green-room, behind the scenes. The whole company had been convened to persuade or shame her out of her obstinacy. The king's lieutenant, the seductive personage of the troop, was on one knee to her, like a lover. He was accustomed to lovers' parts, both on the stage and off it. Off it, he had one favored phrase, hackneyed, but effective. "You are too pretty to be so cruel." Thrice he now repeated that phrase, with a simper between each repetition that might have melted a heart of stone. Behind Sophy's chair, and sticking calico-flowers into the child's tresses, stood the senior matron of the establishment—not a bad sort of woman—who kept the dresses, nursed the sick, revered Rugge, told fortunes on a pack of cards which she always kept in her pocket, and acted occasionally in parts where age was no drawback and ugliness desirable—such as a witch, or duenna, or whatever in the dialogue was poetically called "Hag." Indeed, Hag was the name she usually took from Rugge—that which she bore from her defunct husband was Gormerick. This lady, as she braided the garland, was also bent on the soothing system, saying, with great sweetness, considering that her mouth was full of pins, "Now, deary—now, dovey—look at ooself in the glass; we could beat oo, and pinch oo, and stick pins into oo, dovey, but we won't. Dovey will be good, I know;" and a great patch of rouge came on the child's pale cheeks. The clown therewith, squatting before her with his hands on his knees, grinned lustily, and shrieked out—"My eyes, what a beauty!"

Rugge, meanwhile, one hand thrust in his bosom, contemplated the diplomatic efforts of his ministers, and saw, by Sophy's compressed lips and unwinking eyes, that their cajoleries were unsuccessful. He approached and hissed into her ear—"Don't madden me! don't—you will act, eh!"

"No," said Sophy, suddenly rising; and, tearing the wreath from her hair, she set her small foot on it with force. "No! not if you kill me!"

"Gods!" faltered Rugge. "And the sum I have paid! I am diddled! Who has gone for Mrs. Crane?"

"Tom," said the clown.

The word was scarcely out of the clown's mouth ere Mrs. Crane herself emerged from a side scene, and, putting off her bonnet, laid both hands on the child's shoulders, and looked her in the face without speaking. The child as firmly returned the gaze. Give that child a martyr's cause, and in that frail body there would have been a martyr's soul. Arabella Crane, not inexperienced in children, recognized a power of will stronger than the power of brute force, in that tranquillity of eye—the spark of calm light in its tender blue—blue, pure as the sky; light, steadfast as the star.

"Leave her to me, all of you," said Mrs. Crane. "I will take her to your private room, Mr. Rugge;" and she led the child away to a sort of recess, room it could not be rightly called, fenced round with boxes and crates, and containing the manager's desk and two stools.

"Sophy," then said Mrs. Crane, "you say you will not act unless your grandfather be with you. Now, hear me. You know that I have been always stern and hard with you. I never professed to love you—nor do I. But you have not found me untruthful. When I say a thing seriously, as I am speaking now, you may believe me. Act to-night, and I will promise you faithfully that I will either bring your grandfather here, or I will order it so that you shall be restored to him. If you refuse, I make no threat, but I shall leave this place; and my belief is that you will be your grandfather's death."

"His death—his death—I!"

"By first dying yourself. Oh, you smile; you think it would be happiness to die. What matter that the old man you profess to care for is broken-hearted! Brat, leave selfishness to boys—you are a girl!—Suffer!"

"Selfish!" murmured Sophy, "selfish! that was said of me before. Selfish!—ah, I understand. No, I ought not to wish to die—what would become of him?" She fell on her knees, and raising both her clasped hands, prayed inly, silently—an instant, not more. She rose. "If I do act, then—it is a promise—you will keep it. I shall see him—he shall know where I am—we shall meet!

"A promise—sacred. I will keep it. Oh, girl, how much you will love some day—how your heart will ache! and when you are my age, look at that heart, then at your glass—perhaps you may be, within and without, like me."

Sophy—innocent Sophy—stared, awe-stricken, but uncomprehending. Mrs. Crane led her back, passive.

"There, she will act. Put on the wreath. Trick her out. Hark ye, Mr. Rugge. This is for one night. I have made conditions with her: either you must take back her grandfather, or—she must return to him."

"And my £100?"

"In the latter case ought to be repaid you."

"Am I never to have the Royal York Theatre? Ambition of my life, ma'am! Dreamed of it thrice! Ha! but she will act, and succeed. But to take back the old vagabond—a bitter pill! He shall halve it with me! Ma'am, I'm your grateful—"

CHAPTER VI.

Threadbare is the simile which compares the world to a stage. Schiller, less complimentary than Shakespeare, lowers the illustration from a stage to a puppet-show. But ever between realities and shows there is a secret communication, an undetected interchange—sometimes a stern reality in the heart of the ostensible actor, a fantastic stage-play in the brain of the unnoticed spectator. The Bandit's Child on the proscenium is still poor little Sophy, in spite of garlands and rouge. But that honest rough-looking fellow to whom, in respect for services to Sovereign and Country, the apprentice yields way—may he not be—the crafty Comedian!

TARAN-TARANTARA.—rub-a-dub-dub—play up horn—roll drum—a quarter to eight; and the crowd already thick before Rugge's Grand Exhibition—"Remorseless Baron and Bandit's Child! Young Phenomenon—Juliet Araminta—Patronized by the Nobility in general, and expecting daily to be summoned to perform before the Queen—*Vivat Regina!*"—Rub-a-dub-dub. The company issue from the curtain—range in front of the proscenium. Splendid dresses. The Phenomenon!—'tis she!

"My eyes, there's a beauty!" cries the clown.

The days have already grown somewhat shorter; but it is not yet dusk. How charm-

ingly pretty she still is, despite that horrid paint; but how wasted those poor bare snowy arms!

A most doleful lugubrious dirge mingles with the drum and horn. A man has forced his way close by the stage—a man with a confounded cracked hurdy-gurdy. Whine—whine creaks the hurdy-gurdy. "Stop that—stop that mu-zeek," cries a delicate apprentice, clapping his hands to his ears.

"Pity a poor blind —" answers the man with the hurdy-gurdy.

"Oh you are blind, are you? but we are not deaf. There's a penny not to play. What black thing have you got there by a string?"

"My dog, sir!"

"Deuced ugly one—not like a dog—more like a bear, with horns!"

"I say, master," cries the clown, "here's a blind man come to see the Phenomenon!"

The crowd laugh; they make way for the blind man's black dog. They suspect, from the clown's address, that the blind man has something to do with the company.

You never saw two uglier specimens of their several species than the blind man and his black dog. He had rough red hair and a red beard, his face had a sort of twist that made every feature seem crooked. His eyes were not bandaged, but the lids were closed, and he lifted them up piteously as if seeking for light. He did not seem, however, like a common beggar: had rather the appearance of a reduced sailor. Yes, you would have bet ten to one he had been a sailor, not that his dress belonged to that noble calling, but his build, the roll of his walk, the tie of his cravat, a blue anchor tattoed on that great brown hand—certainly a sailor—a British tar? poor man.

The dog was hideous enough to have been exhibited as a *lusus naturæ*,—evidently very aged—for its face and ears were gray, the rest of it a rusty reddish black; it had immensely long ears, pricked up like horns; it was a dog that must have been brought from foreign parts; it might have come from Acheron, sire by Cerberus, so portentous, and (if not irreverent the epithet) so infernal was its aspect, with that gray face, those antled ears, and its ineffably weird demeanor altogether. A big dog, too, and evidently a strong one. All prudent folks would have made way for a man led by that dog. Whine creaked the hurdy-gurdy, and bow-wow all of a sudden barked the dog. Sophy stifled a cry, pressed her hand to her breast, and such a ray of joy flashed over her face, that it would have warmed your heart for a month to have seen it.

But do you mean to say, Mr. Author, that that British Tar (gallant, no doubt, but hideous) is Gentleman Waife, or that Stygian animal the snowy-curled Sir Isaac?

Upon my word, when I look at them myself, I, the Historian, am puzzled. If it had not been for that bow-wow, I am sure Sophy would not have suspected. Tara-tarantara. Walk in, ladies and gentlemen, walk in; the performance is about to commence! Sophy lingers last.

"Yes, sir," said the blind man, who had been talking to the apprentice—"Yes, sir," said he, loud and emphatically, as if his word had been questioned. "The child was snowed up, but luckily the window of the hut was left open: Exactly at two o'clock in the morning, that dog came to the window, set up a howl, and—"

Sophy could hear no more—led away behind the curtain by the King's Lieutenant. But she had heard enough to stir her heart with an emotion that set all the dimples round her lip into undulating play.

CHAPTER VII.

A Sham carries off the Reality.

And she did act, and how charmingly! with what glee and what gusto! Rugge was beside himself with pride and rapture. He could hardly perform his own Baronial part for admiration. The audience, a far more choicer and more fastidious one that in the Surrey village, was amazed, enthusiastic.

"I shall live to see my dream come true! I shall have the great York Theatre!" said Rugge, as he took off his wig and laid his head on his pillow. "Restore her for the £100! not for thousands!"

Alas, my sweet Sophy; alas! Has not the joy that made thee perform so well undone thee? Ah, hadst thou but had the wit to act horribly, and be hissed!

"Uprose the sun and uprose Baron Rugge."

Not that ordinarily he was a very early man; but his excitement broke his slumbers. He had taken up his quarters on the ground-floor of a small lodging-house close to his exhibition; in the same house lodged his senior Matron, and Sophy herself. Mrs. Gormerick, being ordered to watch the child and never lose sight of her, slept in the same room with Sophy, in the upper story of the house. The old woman served Rugge for housekeeper, made his tea, grilled his chop, and for company's sake, shared his meals. Excitement as often sharpens the appetite as takes it away. Rugge had supped on hope, and he felt a craving for a more substantial breakfast. Accordingly, when he had dressed, he thrust his head into the passage, and seeing there the maid-of-all-work unbarring the street-door, bade her go up-stairs and wake the Hag, that is, Mrs. Gormerick. Saying this, he extended a key; for he ever took the precaution, before retiring to rest, to lock the door of the room to which Sophy was consigned on the outside, and guard the key till the next morning.

The maid nodded, and ascended the stairs. Less time than he expected passed away before Mrs. Gormerick made her appearance, her grey hair streaming under her nightcap, her form endured in a loose wrapper—her very face a tragedy.

"Powers above! What has happened?" exclaimed Rugge, prophetically.

"She is gone," sobbed Mrs. Gormerick; and, seeing the lifted arm and clenched fist of the manager, prudently fainted away.

CHAPTER VIII.

Corollaries from the problem suggested in Chapters VI. and VII.

Broad daylight, nearly nine o'clock indeed, and Jasper Losley is walking back to his inn from the place at which he had dined the evening before. He has spent the night drinking, gambling, and though he looks heated, there is no sign of fatigue. Nature, in wasting on this man many of her most glorious elements of happiness, had not forgotten a herculean constitution—always restless and never tired, always drinking and never drunk. Certainly it is some consolation to delicate invalids, that it seldom happens that the sickly are very wicked. Criminals are generally athletic—constitution and conscience equally tough; large backs to their heads—strong suspensorial muscles—digestions that save them from the overfine nerves of the virtuous. The native animal must be vigorous in the human being, when the moral safeguards are daringly overleapt. Jasper was not alone, but with an acquaintance he had made at the dinner, and whom he invited to his inn to breakfast; they were walking familiarly arm-in-arm.

Very unlike the brilliant Losely—a young man under thirty, who seemed to have washed out all the colors of youth in dirty water. His eyes dull, their whites yellow; his complexion sodden. His form was thickset and heavy; his features pug, with a cross of the bulldog. In dress, a specimen of the flash style of sporting man, as exhibited on the Turf, or more often, perhaps, in the Ring; Belcher neckcloth, with an immense pin representing a jockey at full gallop; cut-away coat, corduroy breeches, and boots with tops of a chalky white. Yet, withal, not the air and walk of a genuine born and bred sporting man, even of the vulgar order. Something about him which reveals the pretender. A would-be hawk with a pigeon's liver—a would-be sportsman with a Cockney's nurture.

Samuel Adolphus Poole is an orphan of respectable connections. His future expectations chiefly rest on an uncle from whom, as godfather, he takes the loathed name of Samuel. He prefers to sign himself Adolphus; he is popularly styled Dolly. For his present existence he relies ostensibly on his salary as an assistant in the house of a London tradesman in a fashionable way of business. Mr. Latham, his employer, has made a considerable fortune, less by his shop than by discounting the bills of his customers, or of other borrowers whom the loan draws into the net of the custom. Mr. Latham connives at the sporting tastes of Dolly Poole. Dolly has often thus been enabled to pick up useful pieces of information as to the names and repute of such denizens of the sporting world as might apply to Mr. Latham for temporary accomodation. Dolly Poole has many sporting friends; he has also many debts. He has been a dupe, he is now a rogue; but he wants

decision of character to put into practice many valuable ideas that his experience of dupe and his development into rogue suggest to his ambition. Still, however, now and then, wherever a shabby trick can be safely done, he is what he calls "lucky."

He has conceived a prodigious admiration for Jasper Losely, one cause for which will be explained in the dialogue about to be recorded; another cause for which is analogous to that loving submission with which some ill-conditioned brute acknowledges a master in the hand that has thrashed it. For at Losely's first appearance at the convivial meeting just concluded, being nettled at the imperious airs of superiority which that roysterer assumed, mistaking for effeminacy Jasper's elaborate dandyism, and not recognizing in the bravo's elegant proportions the tiger-like strength of which, in truth, that tiger-like suppleness should have warned him, Dolly Poole provoked a quarrel, and being himself a stout fellow, nor unaccustomed to athletic exercises, began to spar; the next moment he was at the other end of the room full sprawl on the floor; and two minutes afterwards, the quarrel made up by conciliating banqueters, with every bone in his skin seeming still to rattle, he was generously blubbering out that he never bore malice, and shaking hands with Jasper Losely as if he had found a benefactor. But now to the dialogue.

JASPER.—"Yes, Poole, my hearty, as you say, that fellow trumping my best club lost me the last rubber. There's no certainty in whist, if one has a spoon for a partner."

POOLE.—"No certainty in every rubber, but next to certainty in the long run, when a man plays as well as you do, Mr. Losely. Your winnings to-night must have been pretty large, though you had a bad partner almost every hand;—pretty large—eh?"

JASPER (carelessly).—"Nothing to talk of—a few ponies!"

POOLE.—"More than a few; I should know."

JASPER.—"Why? You did not play after the first rubber."

POOLE.—"No, when I saw your play on that first rubber, I cut out, and bet on you; and very grateful to you I am. Still you would win more with a partner who understood your game."

The shrewd Dolly paused a moment, and leaning significantly on Jasper's arm, added, in a half whisper, "I do; it is a French one." Jasper did not change color, but a quick rise of the eyebrow, and a slight jerk of the neck, betrayed some little surprise or uneasiness; however, he rejoined without hesitation —"French, ay! In France there is more dash in playing out trumps than there is with English players."

"And with a player like you," said Poole, still in a half whisper, "more trumps to play out."

Jasper turned round sharp and short; the hard, cruel expression of his mouth, little seen of late, came back to it. Poole recoiled, and his bones began again to ache. "I did not mean to offend you, Mr. Losely, but to caution."

"Caution!"

"There were two knowing coves, who, if they had not been so drunk, would not have lost their money without a row, and they would have seen *how* they lost it; they are sharpers—you served them right—don't be angry with me. You want a partner—so do I; you play better than I do, but I play well; you shall have two-thirds of our winnings, and when you come to town I'll introduce you to a pleasant set of young fellows—green."

Jasper mused a moment. "You know a thing or two, I see, Master Poole, and we'll discuss the whole subject after breakfast. Arn't you hungry?—No!—I am! Hillo—who's that?"

His arm was seized by Mr. Rugge. "She's gone—fled," gasped the manager, breathless. "Out of the lattice—fifteen feet high—not dashed to pieces—vanished."

"Go on and order breakfast," said Losely to Mr. Poole, who was listening too inquisitively. He drew the manager away. "Can't you keep your tongue in your head before strangers? the girl is gone?"

"Out of the lattice, and fifteen feet high!"

"Any sheets left hanging out of the lattice?"

"Sheets! No."

"Then she did not go without help—somebody must have thrown up to her a rope-ladder—nothing so easy—done it myself scores of times for the descent of 'maids who love the moon,' Mr. Rugge. But at her age there is not a moon—at least there is not a man in the moon; one must dismiss, then, the idea of a rope-ladder—too precocious. But are you

quite sure she is gone? not hiding in some cupboard? *Sacre!*—very odd. Have you seen Mrs. Crane about it?"

"Yes, just come from her; she thinks that villain Waife must have stolen her. But I want you, sir, to come with me to a magistrate."

"Magistrate! I—why?—nonsense—set the police to work."

"Your deposition that she is your lawful child, lawfully made over to me, is necessary for the Inquisition—I mean Police."

"Hang it, what a bother! I hate magistrates, and all belonging to them. Well, I must breakfast! I'll see to it afterwards. Oblige me by not calling Mr. Waife a villain—good old fellow in his way."

"Good! Powers above!"

"But if he took her off, how did he get at her? It must have been preconcerted."

"Ha! true. But she has not been suffered to speak to a soul not in the company—Mrs. Crane excepted."

"Perhaps at the performance last night some signal was given?"

"But if Waife had been there I should have seen him; my troop would have known him; such a remarkable face—one eye, too."

"Well, well, do what you think best. I'll call on you after breakfast; let me go now. *Basta! Basta!*"

Losely wrenched himself from the manager, and strode off to the inn; then, ere joining Poole, he sought Mrs. Crane.

"This going before a magistrate," said Losely, "to depose that I have made over my child to that blackguard showman—in this town too—after such luck as I have had, and where bright prospects are opening on me, is most disagreeable. And supposing, when we have traced Sophy, she would be really with the old man—awkward! In short, my dear friend, my dear Bella"—(Losely could be very coaxing when it was worth his while)—"you just manage this for me. I have a fellow in the next room waiting to breakfast; as soon as breakfast is over I shall be off to the race-ground, and so shirk that ranting old bore; you'll call on him instead, and settle it somehow." He was out of the room before she could answer.

Mrs. Crane found it no easy matter to soothe the infuriate manager when he heard Losely was gone to amuse himself at the race-course. Nor did she give herself much trouble to pacify Mr. Rugge's anger, or assist his investigations. Her interest in the whole affair seemed over. Left thus to his own devices, Rugge, however, began to institute a sharp, and what promised to be an effective investigation. He ascertained that the fugitive certainly had not left by the railway, or by any of the public conveyances; he sent scouts over all the neighborhood; he enlisted the sympathy of the police, who confidently assured him that they had "a network over the three kingdoms;" Rugge's suspicions were directed to Waife—he could collect, however, no evidence to confirm them. No person answering to Waife's description had been seen in the town.

Once, indeed, Rugge was close on the right scent; for, insisting upon Waife's one eye and his possession of a white dog, he was told by several witnesses that a man blind of two eyes and led by a black dog, had been close before the stage, just previous to the performance. But then the clown had spoken to that very man; all the Thespian company had observed him; all of them had known Waife familiarly for years; and all deposed that any creature more unlike to Waife than the blind man could not be turned out of Nature's workshop. But where was that blind man? They found out the wayside inn in which he had taken a lodging for the night; and there it was ascertained that he had paid for his room beforehand, stating that he should start for the race-course early in the morning. Rugge himself set out to the race-course to kill two birds with one stone—catch Mr. Losely—examine the blind man himself.

He did catch Mr. Losely, and very nearly caught something else—for that gentleman was in a ring of noisy horsemen, mounted on a hired hack, and loud as the noisiest. When Rugge came up to his stirrup, and began his harangue, Losely turned his hack round with so sudden an appliance of bit and spur, that the animal lashed out, and its heel went within an inch of the manager's cheek-bone. Before Rugge could recover, Losely was in a hand-gallop. But the blind man! Of course Rugge did not find him? You are mistaken; he did. The blind man was there, dog and all. The manager spoke to him, and did not know him from Adam.

Nor have you or I, my venerated readers, any right whatsoever to doubt whether Mr. Rugge could be so stolidly obtuse. Granting that blind sailor to be the veritable William Waife—William Waife was a Man of Genius, taking pains to appear an ordinary mortal. And the anecdotes of Munden, or of Bamfylde Moore Carew, suffice to tell us how Protean is the power of transformation in a man whose genius is mimetic. But how often does it happen to us, venerated readers, not to recognize a Man of Genius, even when he takes no particular pains to escape detection! A Man of Genius may be for ten years our next-door neighbor—he may dine in company with us twice a-week—his face may be as familiar to our eyes as our arm-chair—his voice to our ears as the click of our parlor-clock—yet we are never more astonished than when all of a sudden, some bright day, it is discovered that our next-door neighbor is—a Man of Genius. Did you ever hear tell of the life of a Man of Genius, but what there were numerous witnesses who deposed to the fact, that until, perfidious dissembler! he flared up and set the Thames on fire, they had never seen anything in him—an odd creature, perhaps a good creature—probably a poor creature;—But a MAN OF GENIUS! They would as soon have suspected him of being the Cham of Tartary! Nay, candid readers, are there not some of you who refuse to the last to recognize the Man of Genius, till he has paid his penny to Charon, and his passport to immortality has been duly examined by the custom-house offices of Styx!

When one half the world drag forth that same next-door neighbor, place him on a pedestal, and have him cried, "O yez! O yez! Found a man of Genius! Public property—open to inspection!" does not the other half the world put on its spectacles, turn up its nose, and cry, "*That* a Man of Genius, indeed! Pelt him!—pelt him!" Then of course there is a clatter, what the vulgar call "a shindy," round the pedestal. Squeezed by his believers, shied at by his scoffers, the poor man gets horribly mauled about, and drops from the perch in the midst of the row. Then they shovel him over, clap a great stone on his relics, wipe their foreheads, shake hands, compromise the dispute, the one half the world admitting, that though he was a genius he was still an ordinary man; the other half allowing, that though he was an ordinary man, he was still a genius. And so on to the next pedestal with its "Hic stet," and the next great stone with its "Hic jacet."

The manager of the Grand Theatrical Exhibition gazed on the blind sailor, and did not know him from Adam!

CHAPTER IX.

The aboriginal Man-eater, or Pocket-Cannibal, is susceptible of the refining influences of Civilization. He decorates his lair with the skins of his victims; he adorns his person with the spoils of those whom he devours. Mr. Losely introduced to Mr. Poole's friends—dresses for dinner; and, combining elegance with appetite, eats them up.

ELATED with the success which had rewarded his talents for pecuniary speculation, and dismissing from his mind all thoughts of the fugitive Sophy and the spoliated Rugge, Jasper Losely returned to London in company with his new friend, Mr. Poole. He left Arabella Crane to perform the same journey, unattended; but that grim lady, carefully concealing any resentment at such want of gallantry, felt assured that she should not be long in London without being honored by his visits.

In renewing their old acquaintance, Mrs. Crane had contrived to establish over Jasper that kind of influence which a vain man, full of schemes that are not to be told to all the world, but which it is convenient to discuss with some confidential friend who admires himself too highly not to respect his secrets, mechanically yields to a woman whose wits are superior to his own.

It is true that Jasper, on his return to the metropolis, was not magnetically attracted towards Podden Place; nay, days and even weeks elapsed, and Mrs. Crane was not gladdened by his presence. But she knew that her influence was only suspended—not extinct. The body attracted was for the moment kept from the body attracting, by the abnormal weights that had dropped into its pockets. Restore the body thus temporarily counterpoised to its former lightness, and it would turn to Podden Place as the needle to the Pole. Meanwhile, oblivious of all such natural

laws, the disloyal Jasper had fixed himself as far from the reach of the magnet as from Bloomsbury's remotest verge is St. James's animated centre. The apartment he engaged was showy and commodious. He added largely to his wardrobe—his dressing-case—his trinket-box. Nor, be it here observed, was Mr. Losely one of those beauish brigands who wear tawdry scarfs over soiled linen, and paste rings upon unwashed digitals.

To do him justice, the man. so stony-hearted to others, loved and cherished his own person with exquisite tenderness, lavished upon it delicate attentions, and gave to it the very best he could afford. He was no coarse debauchee, smelling of bad cigars and ardent spirits. Cigars, indeed, were not among his vices (at worst the rare peccadillo of a *cigarette*)—spirit-drinking was; but the monster's digestion was still so strong, that he could have drunk out a gin palace, and you would only have sniffed the jasmine or heliotrope on the dainty cambric that wiped the last drop from his lips. Had his soul been a tenth part as clean as the form that belied it, Jasper Losely had been a saint! His apartments secured, his appearance thus revised and embellished, Jasper's next care was an equipage in keeping; he hired a smart cabriolet with a high-stepping horse, and, to go behind it, a groom whose size had been stunted in infancy by provident parents designing him to earn his bread in the stables as a light-weight, and therefore mingling his mother's milk with heavy liquors. In short, Jasper Losely set up to be a buck about town; in that capacity Dolly Poole introduced him to several young gentlemen who combined commercial vocations with sporting tastes; they could not but participate in Poole's admiring and somewhat envious respect for Jasper Losely.

There was indeed about the vigorous miscreant a great deal of false brilliancy. Deteriorated from earlier youth though the beauty of his countenance might be, it was still undeniably handsome; and as force of muscle is beauty in itself in the eyes of young sporting men, so Jasper dazzled many a *gracilis puer*, who had the ambition to become an athlete, with the rare personal strength which, as if in the exuberance of animal spirits, he would sometimes condescend to display, by feats that astonished the curious and frightened the timid —such as bending a poker or horse-shoe between hands elegantly white, nor unadorned with rings—or lifting the weight of Samuel Dolly by the waistband, and holding him at arm's-length, with a playful bet of ten to one that he could stand by the fire-place and pitch the said Samuel Dolly out of the open window. To know so strong a man, so fine an animal, was something to boast of! Then, too, if Jasper had a false brilliancy, he had also a false *bonhommie*; it was true that he was somewhat imperious, swaggering, bullying—but he was also off-hand and jocund; and as you knew him, that side-long look, that defying gait (look and gait of the man whom the world cuts), wore away. In fact, he had got into a world which did not cut him, and his exterior was improved by the atmosphere.

Mr. Losely professed to dislike general society. Drawing-rooms were insipid; clubs full of old fogies. "I am for life, my boys," said Mr. Losely—

> "'Can sorrow from the goblet flow,
> Or pain from Beauty's eye?'"

Mr. Losely, therefore, his hat on one side, lounged into the saloons of theatres, accompanied by a cohort of juvenile admirers, their hats on one side also, and returned to the pleasantest little suppers in his own apartment. There "the goblet" flowed—and after the goblet, cigars for some, and a rubber for all.

So puissant Losely's vitality, and so blest by the stars his luck, that his form seemed to wax stronger and his purse fuller by this "life." No wonder he was all for a life of that kind; but the slight beings who tried to keep up with him grew thinner and thinner, and poorer and poorer; a few weeks made their cheeks spectral and their pockets a dismal void. Then as some dropped off from sheer inanition, others whom they had decoyed by their praises of "Life" and its hero, came into the magic circle to fade and vanish in their turn.

In a space of time incredibly brief, not a whist-player was left upon the field; the victorious Losely had trumped out the last; some few whom Nature had endowed more liberally than Fortune, still retained strength enough to sup—if asked;

> "But none who came to sup remained to play."

"Plague on it," said Losely to Poole, as one

afternoon they were dividing the final spoils, "your friends are mightily soon cleaned out; could not even get up double dummy last night; and we must hit on some new plan for replenishing the coffers! You have rich relations; can't I help you to make them more useful?"

Said Dolly Poole, who was looking exceedingly bilious, and had become a martyr to chronic headache.

"My relations are prigs! Some of them give me the cold shoulder, others—a great deal of jaw. But as for tin, I might as well scrape a flint for it. My uncle Sam is more anxious about my sins than the other codgers, because he is my god-father, and responsible for my sins, I suppose; and he says he will put me in the way of being respectable. My head's splitting—"

"Wood does split till it is seasoned," answered Losely. "Good fellow, uncle Sam! He'll put you in the way of tin; nothing else makes a man respectable."

"Yes—so he says; a girl with money—"

"A wife—tin canister! Introduce me to her, and she shall be tied to you."

Samuel Dolly did not appear to relish the idea of such an introduction. "I have not been introduced to her myself," said he. But if you advise me to be spliced, why don't you get spliced yourself? a handsome fellow like you can be at no loss for an heiress."

"Heiresses are the most horrid cheats in the world," said Losely: "there is always some father, or uncle, or fusty Lord Chancellor whose consent is essential, and not to be had. Heiresses in scores have been over head and ears in love with me. Before I left Paris I sold their locks of hair to a wig-maker—three great trunksfull. Honor bright. But there were only two whom I could have safely allowed to run away with me; and they were so closely watched, poor things, that I was forced to leave them to their fate—early graves! Don't talk to me of heiresses, Dolly, I have been the victim of heiresses. But a rich widow is an estimable creature. Against widows, if rich, I have not a word to say; and to tell you the truth, there is a widow whom I suspect I have fascinated, and whose connection I have a particular private reason for deeming desirable! She has a whelp of a son, who is a spoke in my wheel—were I his father-in-law, would not I be a spoke in his? I'd teach the boy '*life*,' Dolly." Here all trace of beauty vanished from Jasper's face, and Poole, staring at him, pushed away his chair. "But,"—continued Losely, regaining his more usual expression of levity and boldness—"But I am not yet quite sure what the widow has, besides her son, in her own possession; we shall see. Meanwhile, is there—*no* chance of a rubber to-night?"

"None; unless you will let Brown and Smith play upon tick."

"Pooh! but there's Robinson, he has an aunt he can borrow from?"

"Robinson! spitting blood, with an attack of *delirium tremens!*—you have done for him."

"Can sorrow from the goblet flow?" said Losely. "Well, I suppose it can—when a man has no coats to his stomach; but you and I, Dolly Poole, have stomachs thick as pea-jackets, and proof as gutta-percha."

Poole forced a ghastly smile, while Losely, gaily springing up, swept his share of booty into his pockets, slapped his comrade on the back, and said—"Then, if the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain! Hang whist, and up with *rouge-et-noir!* I have an infallible method of winning—only, it requires capital. You will club your cash with mine, and I'll play for both. Sup here to-night, and we'll go to the ——hell afterwards."

Samuel Dolly had the most perfect confidence in his friend's science in the art of gambling, and he did not, therefore, dissent from the proposal made. Jasper gave a fresh touch to his toilette, and stepped into his cabriolet. Poole cast on him a look of envy, and crawled to his lodging—too ill for his desk, and with a strong desire to take to his bed.

CHAPTER X.

"Is there a heart that never loved,
Nor felt soft woman's sigh?"

If there be such a heart, it is not in the breast of a Pocket-Cannibal. Your true Man-eater is usually of an amorous temperament: he can be indeed sufficiently fond of a lady to eat her up. Mr. Losely makes the acquaintance of a widow. For further particulars inquire within.

THE dignified serenity of Gloucester Place, Portman Square, is agitated by the intrusion

of a new inhabitant. A house in that favored locality, which had for several months maintained "the solemn stillness and the dread repose" which appertain to dwellings that are to be let upon lease, unfurnished, suddenly started into that exuberant and aggressive life which irritates the nerves of its peaceful neighbors. The bills have been removed from the windows—the walls have been cleaned down and pointed—the street-door repainted a lively green—workmen have gone in and out. The observant ladies (single ones) in the house opposite, discover, by the help of a telescope, that the drawing-rooms have been new papered, canary-colored ground—festoon borders, and that the mouldings of the shutters have been gilt. Gilt shutters! that looks ominous of an ostentatious and party-giving tenant.

Then carts full of furniture have stopped at the door—carpets, tables, chairs, beds, wardrobes—all seemingly new, and in no inelegant taste, have been disgorged into the hall. It has been noticed, too, that every day a lady of slight figure and genteel habilaments has come, seemingly to inspect progress—evidently the new tenant. Sometimes she comes alone; sometimes with a dark-eyed handsome lad, probably her son. Who can she be? what is she? what is her name? her history? has she a right to settle in Gloucester Place, Portman Square? The detective police of London is not peculiarly vigilant; but its defects are supplied by the voluntary efforts of unmarried ladies. The new-comer was a widow; her husband had been in the army; of good family; but a *mauvais sujet;* she had been left in straitened circumstances with an only son. It was supposed that she had unexpectedly come into a fortune—on the strength of which she had removed from Pimlico into Gloucester Place. At length—the preparations completed—one Monday afternoon the widow, accompanied by her son, come to settle. The next day a footman in genteel livery (brown and orange) appeared at the door. Then, for the rest of the week, the baker and butcher called regularly. On the following Sunday, the lady and her son appeared at church."

No reader will be at a loss to discover in the new tenant of No. — Gloucester Place, the widowed mother of Lionel Haughton. The letter for that lady which Darrell had intrusted to his young cousin, had, in complimentary and cordial language, claimed the right to provide for her comfortable and honorable subsistence; and announced that, henceforth, £800 a-year would be placed quarterly to her account at Mr. Darrell's banker, and that an additional sum of £1,200 was already there deposited in her name, in order to enable her to furnish any residence to which she might be inclined to remove. Mrs. Haughton, therewith, had removed to Gloucester Place.

She is seated by the window in her front drawing-room—surveying with proud though grateful heart the elegancies by which she is surrounded. A very winning countenance—lively eyes, that in themselves may be over-quick and petulant; but their expression is chastened by a gentle kindly mouth. And over the whole face, the attitude, the air, even the dress itself, is diffused the unmistakable simplicity of a sincere natural character. No doubt Mrs. Haughton has her tempers and her vanities, and her little harmless feminine weaknesses; but you could not help feeling in her presence that you were with an affectionate, warm-hearted, honest, good woman. She might not have the refinements of tone and manner which stamp the high-bred gentlewoman of convention; she might evince the deficiencies of an imperfect third-rate education; but she was saved from vulgarity by a certain undefinable grace of person and music of voice—even when she said or did things that well-bred people do not say or do; and there was an engaging intelligence in those quick hazel eyes that made you sure that she was sensible, even when she uttered what was silly.

Mrs. Haughton turned from the interior of the room to the open window. She is on the look-out for her son, who has gone to call on Colonel Morley, and who ought to be returned by this time. She begins to get a little fidgety—somewhat cross. While thus standing and thus watchful, there comes thundering down the street a high-stepping horse—bay, with white legs—it whirls on a cabriolet—blue, with vermillion wheels—two hands, in yellow kid gloves, are just seen under the hood. Mrs. Haughton suddenly blushes and draws in her head. Too late! the cabriolet has stopped—a gentleman leans forward, takes off his hat, bows respectfully. "Dear, dear!" murmurs

Mrs. Haughton, "I do think he is going to call; some people are born to be tempted—my temptations have been immense! He is getting out—he knocks—I can't say, now, that I am not at home—very awkward! I wish Lionel were here! What does he mean—neglecting his own mother, and leaving her a prey to tempters?"

While the footman is responding to the smart knock of the visitor, we will explain how Mrs. Haughton had incurred that gentleman's acquaintance. In one of her walks to her new house while it was in the hands of the decorators, her mind being much absorbed in the consideration whether her drawing-room curtains should be chintz or tabouret—just as she was crossing the street, she was all but run over by a gentleman's cabriolet. The horse was hard-mouthed, going at full speed. The driver pulled up just in time; but the wheel grazed her dress, and though she ran back instinctively, yet, when she was safe on the pavement, the fright overpowered her nerves, and she clung to the street-post almost fainting. Two or three passers-by humanely gathered round her; and the driver, looking back, and muttering to himself—"Not bad-looking — neatly dressed—ladylike—French shawl—may have tin—worth while perhaps!"—gallantly descended and hastened to offer apologies, with a respectful hope that she was not injured.

Mrs. Haughton answered somewhat tartly, but being one of those good-hearted women who, apt to be rude, are extremely sorry for it the moment afterwards, she wished to repair any hurt to his feelings occasioned by her first impulse; and when, renewing his excuses, he offered his arm over the crossing she did not like to refuse. On gaining the side of the way on which her house was situated, she had recovered sufficiently to blush for having accepted such familiar assistance from a perfect stranger, and somewhat to falter in returning thanks for his politeness.

Our gentleman, whose estimate of his attractions was not humble, ascribed the blushing cheek and faltering voice to the natural effect produced by his appearance; and he himself admiring very much a handsome bracelet on her wrist, which he deemed a favorable prognostic of "tin," he watched her to her door, and sent his groom in the course of the evening to make discreet inquiries in the neighborhood. The result of the inquiries induced him to resolve upon prosecuting the acquaintance thus begun.

He contrived to learn the hours at which Mrs. Haughton usually visited the house, and to pass by Gloucester Place at the very nick of time. His bow was recognizing, respectful, interrogative—a bow that asked "how much farther?" But Mrs. Haughton's bow respondent seemed to declare "not at all!" The stranger did not adventure more that day; but a day or two afterwards he came again into Gloucester Place, on foot. On that occasion Mrs. Haughton was with her son, and the gentleman would not seem to perceive her. The next day he returned; she was then alone, and just as she gained her door, he advanced —"I beg you ten thousand pardons, madam, but if I am rightly informed, I have the honor to address Mrs. Charles Haughton!"

The lady bowed in surprise.

"Ah, madam, your lamented husband was one of my most particular friends."

"You don't say so!" cried Mrs. Haughton: And looking more attentively at the stranger, there was in his dress and appearance something that she thought very stylish; a particular friend of Charles Haughton's was sure to be stylish—to be a man of the first water. And she loved the poor Captain's memory, her heart warmed to any "particular friend of his."

"Yes," resumed the gentleman, noting the advantage he had gained, "though I was considerably his junior, we were great cronies—excuse that familiar expression—in the Hussars together—"

"The Captain was not in the Hussars, sir; he was in in the Guards."

"Of course he was; but I was saying—In the Hussars, together with the Guards, there were some very fine fellows—very fine—he was one of them. I could not resist paying my respects to the widowed lady of so fine a fellow. I know it is a liberty, ma'am, but 'tis my way. People who know me well—and I have a large acquaintance—are kind enough to excuse my way. And to think that villanous horse, which I had just bought out of Lord Bolton's stud—(200 guineas, ma'am, and cheap)—should have nearly taken the life of Charles Haughton's lovely relict. If anybody else had been driving that brute, I shudder to

think what might have been the consequences; but I have a wrist of iron. Strength is a vulgar qualification—very vulgar—but when it saves a lady from perishing, how can one be ashamed of it? But I am detaining you. Your own house, Mrs. Haughton?"

"Yes, sir, I have just taken it, but the workmen have not finished. I am not yet settled here."

"Charming situation! My friend left a son, I believe?—In the army already?"

"No, sir, but he wishes it very much."

"Mr. Darrell, I think, could gratify that wish."

"What! you know Mr. Darrell, that most excellent generous man. All we have we owe to him."

The gentleman abruptly turned aside—wisely for his expression of face at that praise might have startled Mrs. Haughton.

"Yes, I knew him once. He has had many a fee out of my family. Goodish lawyer—cleverish man—and rich as a Jew. I should like to see my old friend's son, ma'am. He must be monstrous handsome with such parents!"

"Oh, sir, very like his father. I shall be proud to present him to you."

"Ma'am, I thank you. I will have the honor to call—"

And thus is explained how Jasper Losely has knocked at Mrs. Haughton's door—has walked up her stairs—has seated himself in her drawing-room, and is now edging his chair somewhat nearer to her, and throwing into his voice and looks a degree of admiration, which has been sincerely kindled by the aspect of her elegant apartments.

Jessica Haughton was not one of those women, if such there be, who do not know when a gentleman is making up to them. She knew perfectly well, that with a very little encouragement, her visitor would declare himself a suitor. Nor, to speak truth, was she quite insensible to his handsome person, nor quite unmoved by his flatteries. She had her weak points, and vanity was one of them. Nor conceived she, poor lady, the slightest suspicion that Jasper Losely was not a personage whose attentions might flatter any woman. Though he had not even announced a name, but, pushing aside the footman, had sauntered in with as familiar an ease as if he had been a first cousin: though he had not uttered a syllable that could define his station, or attest his boasted friendship with the dear defunct, still Mrs. Haughton implicitly believed that she was with one of those gay Chiefs of *Ton* who had glittered round her Charlie in that earlier morning of his life, ere he had sold out of the Guards, and bought himself out of jail; a lord, or an honorable at least; and she was even (I shudder to say) revolving in her mind whether it might not be an excellent thing for her dear Lionel if she could prevail on herself to procure for him the prop and guidance of a distinguished and brilliant father-in-law—rich, noble, evidently good-natured, sensible, attractive. Oh! but the temptation was growing more and more IMMENSE! when suddenly the door opened, and in sprang Lionel, crying out, "Mother, dear, the Colonel has come with me on purpose to—"

He stopped short, staring hard at Jasper Losely. That gentleman advanced a few steps, extending his hand, but came to an abrupt halt on seeing Colonel Morley's figure now filling up the doorway. Not that he feared recognition—the Colonel did not know him by sight, but he knew by sight the Colonel. In his own younger day, when lolling over the rails of Rotten Row, he had enviously noted the leaders of fashion pass by, and Colonel Morley had not escaped his observation. Colonel Morley, indeed, was one of those men who by name and repute are sure to be known to all who, like Jasper Losely, in his youth, would fain learn something about that gaudy, babbling, and remorseless world which, like the sun, either vivifies of corrupts, according to the properties of the object on which it shines. Strange to say, it was the mere sight of the real fine gentleman that made the mock fine gentleman shrink and collapse. Though Jasper Losely knew himself to be still called a magnificent man—one of royal Nature's Life-guardsmen—though confident that from top to toe his habiliments could defy the criticism of the strictest martinet in polite costume, no sooner did that figure, by no means handsome, and clad in garments innocent of buckram, but guilty of wrinkles—appear on the threshold, than Jasper Losely felt small and shabby, as if he had been suddenly reduced to five feet two, and had bought his coat out of an old clothesman's bag.

Without appearing even to see Mr. Losely, the Colonel, in his turn, as he glided past him towards Mrs. Haughton, had, with what is proverbially called the corner of the eye, taken the whole of that impostor's superb *personnel* into calm survey, had read him through and through, and decided on these two points without the slightest hesitation—"a lady-killer and a sharper."

Quick as breathing had been the effect thus severally produced on Mrs. Haughton's visitors, which it has cost so many words to describe—so quick that the Colonel, without any apparent pause of dialogue, has already taken up the sentence Lionel left uncompleted, and says, as he bows over Mrs. Haughton's hand, "come on purpose to claim acquaintance with an old friend's widow, a young friend's mother."

MRS. HAUGHTON.—I am sure, Colonel Morley, I am very much flattered. And you, too, knew the poor dear Captain; 'tis so pleasant to think that his old friends come round us now. This gentleman, also, was a particular friend of dear Charles's.

The Colonel had somewhat small eyes, which moved with habitual slowness. He lifted those eyes, let them drop upon Jasper (who stood in the middle of the room, with one hand still half-extended towards Lionel), and letting the eyes rest there while he spoke, repeated,

"Particular friend of Charles Haughton's—the only one of his particular friends whom I never had the honor to see before."

Jasper, who, whatever his deficiency in other virtues, certainly did not lack courage, made a strong effort at self-possession, and without replying to the Colonel, whose remark had not been directly addressed to himself, said in his most rollicking tone—"Yes, Mrs. Haughton, Charles was my particular friend, but"—lifting his eye-glass—"but this gentleman was," dropping the eye-glass negligently, "not in our set, I suppose." Then advancing to Lionel, and seizing his hand, "I must introduce myself—the image of your father, I declare! I was saying to Mrs. Haughton how much I should like to see you—proposing to her, just as you came in, that we should go to the play together. Oh, ma'am, you may trust him to me safely. Young men should see LIFE." Here Jasper tipped Lionel one of those knowing winks with which he was accustomed to delight and ensnare the young friends of Mr. Poole, and hurried on: "But in an innocent way, ma'am, such as mothers would approve. We'll fix an evening for it when I have the honor to call again. Good morning, Mrs. Haughton. Your hand again, sir (to Lionel).—Ah, we shall be great friends, I guess! You must let me take you out in my cab—teach you to handle the ribbons, eh? 'Gad, my old friend Charles *was* a whip. Ha! ha! Good-day, good-day!"

Not a muscle had moved in the Colonel's face during Mr. Losely's jovial monologue. But when Jasper had bowed himself out, Mrs. Haughton, curtsying, and ringing the bell for the footman to open the street-door, the man of the world (and, as man of the world, Colonel Morley was consummate) again raised those small slow eyes—this time towards *her* face—and dropped the words,—

"My old friend's particular friend is—not bad looking, Mrs. Haughton!"

"And so lively and pleasant," returned Mrs. Haughton, with a slight rise of color, but no other sign of embarrassment. "It may be a nice acquaintance for Lionel."

"Mother!" cried that ungrateful boy, "you are not speaking seriously. I think the man is odious. If he were not my father's friend, I should say he was—"

"What, Lionel?" asked the Colonel blandly—"was what?"

"Snobbish, sir."

"Lionel, how dare you!" exclaimed Mrs. Haughton. "What vulgar words boys do pick up at school, Colonel Morley."

"We must be careful that they do not pick up worse than words when they leave school, my dear madam. You will forgive me, but Mr. Darrell has so expressly—of course, with your permission—commended this young gentleman to my responsible care and guidance—so openly confided to me his views and intentions, that perhaps you would do me the very great favor not to force upon him, against his own wishes, the acquaintance of—that very good-looking person."

Mrs. Haughton pouted, but kept down her rising temper. The Colonel began to awe her.

"By-the-bye," continued the man of the world, "may I inquire the name of my old friend's particular friend?"

"His name—upon my word I really don't know it. Perhaps he left his card—ring the bell, Lionel."

"You don't know his name, yet you know *him*, ma'am, and would allow your son to see LIFE under his auspices! I beg you ten thousand pardons; but even ladies the most cautious, mothers the most watchful, are exposed to—"

"Immense temptations—that is—to—to—"

"I understand perfectly, my dear Mrs. Haughton."

The footman appeared. "Did that gentleman leave a card?"

"No, ma'am."

"Did not you ask his name when he entered?"

"Yes, ma'am, but he said he would announce himself."

When the footman had withdrawn, Mrs. Haughton exclaimed piteously, "I have been to blame, Colonel, I see it. But Lionel will tell you how I came to know the gentleman—the gentleman who nearly ran over me, Lionel, and then spoke so kindly about your dear father."

"Oh, that is the person!—I supposed so," cried Lionel, kissing his mother, who was inclined to burst into tears. "I can explain it all now, Colonel Morley. Anyone who says a kind word about my father, warms my mother's heart to him at once—is it not so, mother dear?"

"And long be it so," said Colonel Morley, with grateful earnestness; "and may such be my passport to your confidence, Mrs. Haughton. Charles was my old schoolfellow—a little boy when I and Darrell were in the sixth form; and, pardon me, when I add, that if that gentleman were ever Charles Haughton's particular friend, he could scarcely have been a very wise one. For, unless his appearance greatly belie his years, he must have been little more than a boy when Charles Haughton left Lionel fatherless."

Here, in the delicacy of tact, seeing that Mrs. Haughton looked ashamed of the subject, and seemed aware of her imprudence, the Colonel rose, with a request — cheerfully granted—that Lionel might be allowed to come to breakfast with him the next morning.

CHAPTER XI.

A man of the world, having accepted a troublesome charge, considers "what he will do with it;" and, having promptly decided, is sure, first, that he could not have done better; and, secondly, that much may be said to prove that he could not have done worse.

RESERVING to a later occasion any more detailed description of Colonel Morley, it suffices for the present to say that he was a man of a very fine understanding, as applied to the special world in which he lived. Though no one had a more numerous circle of friends, and though with many of those friends he was on that footing of familiar intimacy which Darrell's active career once, and his rigid seclusion of late, could not have established with any idle denizen of that brilliant society in which Colonel Morley moved and had his being, yet to Alban Morley's heart (a heart not easily reached) no friend was so dear as Guy Darrell. They had entered Eton on the same day—left it the same day—lodged while there in the same house; and though of very different characters, formed one of those strong, imperishable brotherly affections which the Fates weave into the very woof of existence.

Darrell's recommendation would have secured to any young *protégé* Colonel Morley's gracious welcome and invaluable advice. But, both as Darrell's acknowledged kinsman, and as Charles Haughton's son, Lionel called forth his kindliest sentiments, and obtained his most sagacious deliberations. He had already seen the boy several times, before waiting on Mrs. Haughton, deeming it would please her to defer his visit until she could receive him in all the glories of Gloucester Place; and he had taken Lionel into high favor, and deemed him worthy of a conspicuous place in the world. Though Darrell in his letter to Colonel Morley had emphatically distinguished the position of Lionel, as a favored kinsman, from that of a presumptive or even a probable heir, yet the rich man had also added: "But I wish him to take rank as the representative to the Haughtons; and whatever I may do with the bulk of my fortune, I shall insure to him a liberal independence. The completion of his education, the adequate allowance to him, the choice of a profession, are matters in which I entreat you to act for yourself, as if you were

his guardian. I am leaving England—I may be abroad for years." Colonel Morley, in accepting the responsibilities thus pressed on him, brought to bear upon his charge subtle discrimination, as well as conscientious anxiety.

He saw that Lionel's heart was set upon the military profession, and that his power of application seemed lukewarm and desultory when not cheered and concentred by enthusiasm, and would, therefore, fail him if directed to studies which had no immediate reference to the objects of his ambition. The Colonel, accordingly, dismissed the idea of sending him for three years to an University. Alban Morley summed up his theories on the collegiate ordeal in the succinct aphorisms: "Nothing so good as an University education, nor worse than an University without its education. Better throw a youth at once into the wider sphere of a capital, provided you there secure to his social life the ordinary checks of good company, the restraints imposed by the presence of decorous women, and men of grave years and dignified repute;—than confine him to the exclusive society of youths of his own age—the age of wild spirits and unreflecting imitation—unless he cling to the safeguard, which is found in hard reading, less by the book-knowledge it bestows, than by the serious and preoccupied mind which it abstracts from the coarser temptations."

But Lionel, younger in character than in years, was too boyish as yet to be safely consigned to those trials of tact and temper which await the neophyte who enters on life through the doors of a mess-room. His pride was too morbid, too much on the alert for offence; his frankness too crude, his spirit too untamed by the insensible discipline of social commerce.

Quoth the observant Man of the World: "Place his honor in his own keeping, and he will carry it about with him on full cock, to blow off a friend's head or his own before the end of the first month. Huffy—decidedly huffy! and of all causes that disturb regiments, and induce courts-martial—the commonest cause is a huffy lad! Pity! for that youngster has in him the right metal—spirit and talent that should make him a first-rate soldier. It would be time well spent that should join professional studies with that degree of polite culture which gives dignity and cures *huffiness*. I must get him out of London, out of England—cut him off from his mother's apron-strings, and the particular friends of his poor father who prowl unannounced into the widow's drawing-room. He shall go to Paris—no better place to learn military theories, and be civilized out of huffy dispositions.

No doubt my old friend, the chevalier, who has the art strategic at his finger-ends, might be induced to take him *en pension*, direct his studies, and keep him out of harm's way. I can secure to him the *entrée* into the circles of the rigid old Faubourg St. Germain, where manners are best bred, and household ties most respected. Besides, as I am so often at Paris myself, I shall have him under my eye, and a few years there, spent in completing him as man, may bring him nearer to that marshal's baton which every recruit should have in his eye, than if I started him at once a raw boy, unable to take care of himself as an ensign, and unfitted, save by mechanical routine, to take care of others, should he live to buy the grade of a colonel."

The plans thus promptly formed, Alban Morley briefly explained to Lionel, when the boy came to breakfast in Curzon Street; requesting him to obtain Mrs. Haughton's acquiescence in that exercise of the discretionary powers with which he had been invested by Mr. Darrell. To Lionel, the proposition that commended the very studies to which his tastes directed his ambition, and placed his initiation into responsible manhood among scenes bright to his fancy, because new to his experience, seemed of course the perfection of wisdom.

Less readily pleased was poor Mrs. Haughton, when her son returned to communicate the arrangement, backing a polite and well-worded letter from the Colonel with his own more artless eloquence. Instantly she flew off on the wing of her "little tempers." "What! her only son taken from her—sent to that horrid Continent, just when she was so respectably settled! What was the good of money if she was to be parted from her boy! Mr. Darrell might take the money back if he pleased—she would write and tell him so. Colonel Morley had no feelng; and she was shocked to think Lionel was in such unnatural hands. She saw very plainly that he no longer cared for her—a serpent's tooth, etc. etc. But

as soon as the burst was over, the sky cleared, and Mrs. Haughton became penitent and sensible. Then her grief for Lionel's loss was diverted by preparations for his departure. There was his wardrobe to see to—a patent portmanteau to purchase and to fill. And, all done, the last evening mother and son spent together, though painful at the moment, it would be happiness for both hereafter to recall! Their hands clasped in each other—her head leaning on his young shoulder—her tears kissed so soothingly away. And soft words of kindly motherly counsel, sweet promises of filial performance. Happy, thrice happy, as an after remembrance, be the final parting between hopeful son and fearful parent, at the foot of that mystic bridge, which starts from the threshold of home—lost in the dimness of the far-opposing shore!—bridge over which goes the boy who will never return but as the man.

CHAPTER XII.

The Pocket-Cannibal baits his woman's trap with love-letters—And a Widow allured steals timidly towards it from under the weeds.

JASPER LOSELY is beginning to be hard up! The infallible calculation at *rouge-et-noir* has carried off all that capital which had accumulated from the savings of the young gentlemen whom Dolly Poole had contributed to his exchequer. Poole himself is beset by duns, and pathetically observes "that he has lost three stone in weight, and that he believes the calves to his legs are gone to enlarge his liver."

Jasper is compelled to put down his cabriolet—to discharge his groom—to retire from his fashionable lodgings; and just when the prospect even of a dinner becomes dim, he bethinks himself of Arabella Crane, and remembers that she promised him £5, nay £10, which are still due from her. He calls—he is received like the prodigal son. Nay, to his own surprise, he finds Mrs. Crane has made her house much more inviting—the drawing-rooms are cleaned up; the addition of a few easy articles of furniture gives them quite a comfortable air. She herself has improved in costume—though her favorite color still remains iron-gray. She informs Jasper that she fully expected him—that these preparations are in his honor—that she has engaged a very good cook—that she hopes he will dine with her when not better engaged—in short, lets him feel himself at home in Podden Place.

Jasper at first suspected a sinister design, under civilities that his conscience told him were unmerited—a design to entrap him into that matrimonial alliance which he had so ungallantly scouted, and from which he still recoiled with an abhorrence which Man is not justified in feeling for any connubial partner less preternaturally terrific than the Witch of Endor or the Bleeding Nun!

But Mrs. Crane quickly and candidly hastened to dispel his ungenerous apprehensions. "She had given up," she said, "all ideas so preposterous—love and wedlock were equally out of her mind. But ill as he had behaved to her, she could not but feel a sincere regard for him—a deep interest in his fate. He ought still to make a brilliant marriage—did that idea not occur to him? She might help him there with her woman's wit. In short," said Mrs. Crane, pinching her lips; "In short, Jasper, I feel for you as a *mother*. Look on me as such!"

That pure and affectionate notion wonderfully tickled and egregiously delighted Jasper Losely. "Look on you as a mother! I will," said he, with emphaisis "Best of creatures!"

And though in his own mind he had not a doubt that she still adored him (not as a mother), he believed it was a disinterested, devoted adoration, such as the beautiful brute really had inspired more than once in his abominable life. Accordingly, he moved in the neighborhood of Podden Place, contenting himself with a second-floor bedroom in a house recommended to him by Mrs. Crane, and taking his meals at his adopted mother's with filial familiarity. She expressed a desire to make Mr. Poole's acquaintance—Jasper hastened to present that worthy. Mrs. Crane invited Samuel Dolly to dine one day, to sup the next; she lent him £3 to redeem his dress-coat from pawn, and she gave him medicaments for the relief of his headache.

Samuel Dolly venerated her as a most superior woman—envied Jasper such a "mother." Thus easily did Arabella Crane possess herself of the existence of Jasper Losely. Lightly her fingers closed over it—lightly as the fisherman's over the captivated trout. And what-

ever her generosity, it was not carried to imprudence. She just gave to Jasper enough to bring him within her power—she had no idea of ruining herself by larger supplies—she concealed from him the extent of her income (which was in chief part derived from house rents), the amount of her savings, even the name of her banker.

And if he carried off to the *rouge-et-noir* table the coins he obtained from her, and came for more, Mrs. Crane put on the look of a mother incensed—mild but awful—and scolded as mothers sometimes can scold. Jasper Losely began to be frightened at Mrs. Crane's scoldings. And he had not that power over her, which, though arrogated by a lover, is denied to an adopted son. His mind, relieved from the habitual distraction of the gambling-table—for which the resource was wanting—settled with redoubled ardor on the image of Mrs. Haughton. He had called at her house several times since the fatal day on which he had met there Colonel Morley, but Mrs. Haughton was never at home. And as when the answer was given to him by the footman, he had more than once, on crossing the street, seen herself through the window, it was clear that his acquaintance was not courted. Jasper Losely, by habit, was the reverse of a pertinacious and troublesome suitor—not, heaven knows, from want of audacity, but from excess of self-love. Where a Lovelace so superb condescended to make overtures, a Clarissa so tasteless as to decline them deserved and experienced his contempt. Besides, steadfast and prolonged pursuit of any object, however important and attractive, was alien to the levity and fickleness of his temper. But in this instance he had other motives than those on the surface for unusual perseverance.

A man like Jasper Losely never reposes implicit confidence in any one. He is garrulous, indiscreet—lets out much that Machiavel would have advised him not to disclose; but he invariably has nooks and corners in his mind which he keeps to himself. Jasper did not confide to his adopted mother his designs upon his intended bride. But she knew them through Poole, to whom he was more frank; and when she saw him looking over her select and severe library—taking therefrom the *Polite Letter-Writer* and the *Elegant Extracts*, Mrs. Crane divined at once that Jasper Losely was meditating the effect of epistolary seduction upon the widow of Gloucester Place.

Jasper did not write a bad love-letter in the florid style. He had at his command, in especial, certain poetical quotations, the effect of which repeated experience had assured him to be as potent upon the female breast as the incantations or *Carmina* of the ancient sorcery The following in particular:

> "Had I a heart for falsehood framed,
> I ne'er could injure you."

Another—generally to be applied when confessing that his career had been interestingly wild, and would, if pity were denied him, be pathetically short:

> "When he who adores thee has left but the name
> Of his faults and his follies behind."

Armed with these quotations—many a sentence from the *Polite Letter-Writer* or the *Elegant Extracts*—and a quire of rose-edged paper, Losely sat down to Ovidian composition. But as he approached the close of Epistle the First, it occurred to him that a signature and address were necessary. The address not difficult. He could give Poole's (hence his confidence to that gentleman)—Poole had a lodging in Bury Street, St. James', a fashionable locality for single men. But the name required more consideration. They were insuperable objections against signing his own, to any person who might be in communication with Mr. Darrell—a pity, for there was a good old family of the name of Losely. A name of aristocratic sound might indeed be readily borrowed from any lordly proprietor thereof without asking a formal consent. But this loan was exposed to danger. Mrs. Haughton might very naturally mention such name, as borne by her husband's friend, to Colonel Morley, and Colonel Morley would most probably know enough of the connections and relations of any peer so honored, to say "there is no such Greville, Cavendish, or Talbot." But Jasper Losely was not without fertility of invention and readiness of resource.

A grand idea, worthy of a master, and proving that, if the man had not been a rogue in grain, he could have been reared into a very clever politician, flashed across him. He would sign himself "SMITH." Nobody could

say there is no such Smith; nobody could say that a Smith might not be a most respectable, fashionable, highly-connected man. There are Smiths who are millionaires—Smiths who are large-acred squires—substantial baronets—peers of England, and pillars of the State. You can no more question a man's right to be a Smith than his right to be a Briton; and wide as the diversity of rank, lineage, virtue, and genius in Britons, is the diversity in Smiths. But still a name so generic often affects a definitive precursor. Jasper signed himself "J. COURTENAY SMITH."

He called, and left Epistle the First with his own kid-gloved hand, inquiring first if Mrs. Haughton were at home, and responded to in the negative this time, he asked for her son. "Her son was gone abroad with Colonel Morley." Jasper, though sorry to lose present hold over the boy, was consoled at learning that the Colonel was off the ground. More sanguine of success, he glanced up at the window and, sure that Mrs. Haughton was there, though he saw her not, lifted his hat with as melancholy an expression of reproach as he could throw into his face.

The villian could not have found a moment in Mrs. Haughton's widowed life so propitious to his chance of success. In her lodging-house at Pimlico, the good lady had been too incessantly occupied for that idle train of reverie, in which the poets assure us that Cupid finds leisure to whet his arrows, and take his aim. Had Lionel still been by her side—had even Colonel Morley been in town—her affection for the one, her awe of the other, would have been her safeguards. But alone in that fine new house—no friends, no acquaintances as yet—no dear visiting circle on which to expend the desire of talk and the zest for innocent excitement that are natural to ladies of an active mind and a nervous temperament, the sudden obtrusion of a suitor so respectfully ardent—oh, it is not to be denied that the temptation was IMMENSE!

And when that note, so neatly folded—so elegantly sealed—lay in her irresolute hand, the widow could not but feel that she was still young, still pretty; and her heart flew back to the day when the linen-draper's fair daughter had been the cynosure of the provincial High Street—when young officers had lounged to and fro the pavement, looking in at her window—when ogles and notes had alike beset her, and the dark eyes of the irresistible Charlie Haughton had first taught her pulse to tremble. And in her hand lies the letter of Charlie Haughton's particular friend. She breaks the seal. She reads—a declaration!

Five letters in five days did Jasper write. In the course of those letters, he explains away the causes for suspicion which Colonel Morley had so ungenerously suggested. He is no longer anonymous—he is J. Courtenay Smith. He alludes incidentally to the precocious age in which he had become "lord of himself, that heritage of woe." This accounts for his friendship with a man so much his senior as the late Charlie. He confesses that, in the vortex of dissipation his hereditary estates have dissappeared; but he has still a genteel independence; and with the woman of his heart, etc., etc. He had never before known what real love was, etc. Pleasure had fired his maddening soul;" "But the heart—the heart been lonely still." He entreated only a personal interview, even though to be rejected—scorned. Still, when "he who adored her had left but the name," etc., etc. Alas! alas! as Mrs. Haughton put down Epistle the Fifth, she hesitated; and the woman who hesitates in such a case, is sure, at least—to write a civil answer.

Mrs. Haughton wrote but three lines—still they *were* civil—and conceded an interview for the next day, though implying that it was but for the purpose of assuring Mr. J. Courtenay Smith in person, of her unalterable fidelity to the shade of his lamented friend.

In high glee Jasper showed Mrs. Haughton's answer to Dolly Poole, and began seriously to speculate on the probable amount of the widow's income, and the value of her movables in Gloucester Place. Thence he repaired to Mrs. Crane; and, emboldened by the hope, for ever, to escape from her maternal tutelage, braved her scoldings, and asked for a couple of soveriegns. He was sure that he should be in luck that night. She gave to him the sum, and spared the scoldings. But, as soon as he was gone, conjecturing from the bravado of his manner what had really occurred, Mrs Crane put on her bonnet and went out.

CHAPTER XIII.

Unhappy is the man who puts his trust in—a woman.

LATE that evening a lady, in a black veil, knocked at No. ** Gloucester Place, and asked to see Mrs. Haughton on urgent business. She was admitted. She remained but five minutes.

The next day, when, "gay as a bridegroom prancing to his bride," Jasper Losely presented himself at the widow's door, the servant placed in his hand a packet, and informed him bluffly that Mrs. Haughton had gone out of town. Jasper with difficulty suppressed his rage, opened the packet—his own letters returned, with these words—"Sir, your name is not Courtenay Smith. If you trouble me again, I shall apply to the police." Never from female hand had Jasper Losely's pride received such a slap on its face. He was literally stunned. Mechanically he hastened to Arabella Crane; and having no longer any object in concealment, but, on the contrary, a most urgent craving for sympathy, he poured forth his indignation and wrongs. No mother could be more consolatory than Mrs. Crane. She soothed, she flattered, she gave him an excellent dinner; after which, she made him so comfortable—what with an easy chair and complimentary converse, that, when Jasper rose late to return to his lodging, he said: "After all, if I had been ugly and stupid, and of a weakly constitution, I should have been of a very domestic turn of mind."

CHAPTER XIV.

No author ever drew a character, consistent to human nature, but what he was forced to ascribe to it many inconsistencies.

WHETHER moved by that pathetic speech of Jasper's, or by some other impulse not less feminine, Arabella Crane seemed suddenly to conceive the laudable and arduous design of reforming that portentous sinner. She had some distant relations in London, whom she very rarely troubled with a visit, and who, had she wanted anything from them, would have shut their doors in her face; but as, on the contrary, she was well off, single, and might leave her money to whom she pleased, the distant relations were always warm in manner, and prodigal in their offers of service. The next day she repaired to one of these kinsfolk—a person in a large way of business—and returned home with two great books in white sheepskin. And when Losely looked in to dine, she said, in the suavest tones a tender mother can address to an amiable truant, "Jasper, you have great abilities;—at the gaming-table abilities are evidently useless—your forte is calculation—you were always very quick at that. I have been fortunate enough to procure you an easy piece of task-work, for which you will liberally remunerated. A friend of mine wishes to submit those books to a regular accountant; he suspects that a clerk has cheated him, but he cannot tell how or where. You know accounts thoroughly—no one better—and the pay will be ten guineas."

Jasper, though his early life had rendered familiar and facile to him the science of book-keeping and double-entry, made a grimace at the revolting idea of any honest labor, however light and well paid. But ten guineas were an immense temptation, and in the evening Mrs. Crane coaxed him into the task.

Neglecting no feminine art to make the lawless nomad feel at home under her roof, she had provided for his ease and comfort morocco slippers and a superb dressing-robe, in material rich, in color becoming. Men, single or marital, are accustomed to connect the idea of home with dressing-gown and slippers, especially if, after dinner, they apply (as Jasper Losely now applied) to occupations in which the brain is active, the form in repose. What achievement, literary or scientific, was ever accomplished by a student strapped to unyielding boots, and "cabined, cribbed, confined," in a coat that fits him like wax? As robed in the cozy garment which is consecrated to the sacred familiar Lares, the relaxing, handsome ruffian sate in the quiet room, bending his still regular profile over the sheepskin books—the harmless pen in that strong well-shaped hand, Mrs. Crane watched him with a softening countenance.

To bear him company, she had actively taken, herself, to work—the gold thimble dragged from its long repose—marking and hemming, with nimble artistic fingers, new cravats for the adopted son! Strange creature

is woman! Ungrateful and perfidious as that sleek tiger before her had often proved himself—though no man could less deserve one kindly sentiment in a female heart—though she knew that he cared nothing for her, still it was pleasing to know that he cared for nobody else—that he was sitting in the same room—and Arabella Crane felt, that if that existence could continue, she could forget the past, and look contented towards the future. Again I say, strange creature is woman—and in this instance, creature more strange, because so grim! But as her eyes soften, and her fingers work, and her mind revolves schemes for making that lawless wild beast an innocuous tame animal, who can help feeling for and with grim, Arabella Crane?

Poor woman! And will not the experiment succeed? Three evenings does Jasper Losely devote to this sinless life and its peaceful occupation. He completes his task—he receives the ten guineas. (How much of that fee came out of Mrs. Crane's privy purse?) He detects three mistakes, which justify suspicion of the book-keeper's integrity. Set a thief to catch a thief! He is praised for acuteness, and promised a still lighter employment, to be still better paid. He departs, declaring that he will come the next day, earlier than usual—he volunteers an eulogium upon work in general—he vows that evenings so happy he has not spent for years; he leaves Mrs. Crane so much impressed by the hope of his improvement, that if a good clergyman had found her just at that moment, she might almost have been induced to pray. But—

"Heu quoties fidem
Mutatosque deos flebit!"

Jasper Losely returns not, neither to Podden Place nor to his lodging in the neighborhood. Days elapse; still he comes not; even Poole does not know where he has gone; even Poole has not seen him! But that latter worthy is now laid up with a serious rheumatic fever—confined to his room and water gruel. And Jasper Losely is not the man to intrude himself on the privacy of a sick-chamber. Mrs. Crane, more benevolent, visits Poole—cheers him up—gets him a nurse—writes to Uncle Sam. Poole blesses her. He hopes that Uncle Sam, moved by the spectacle of his sick-bed, will say, "Don't let your debts fret you—I will pay them!" Whatever her disappointment or resentment at Jasper's thankless and mysterious evasion, Arabella Crane is calmly confident of his return. To her servant, Bridget Greggs, who was perhaps the sole person in the world who entertained affection for the lone gaunt woman, and who held Jasper Losley in profound detestation, she said, with tranquil sternness, "That man has crossed my life, and darkened it. He passed away, and left Night behind him. He has dared to return. He shall never escape me again, till the grave yawn for one of us.

"But, Lor love you, Miss, you would not put yourself in the power of such a black-hearted villing?"

"In *his* power! No, Bridgett; fear not, he must be in mine—sooner or latter in mine—hand and foot Patience!"

As she was thus speaking—a knock at the door—"It is he—I told you so—quick!"

But it was not Jasper Losely. It was Mr. Rugge.

CHAPTER XV.

"When God wills, all winds bring rain."
—*Ancient Proverb.*

The Manager had not submitted to the loss of his property in Sophy and £100, without taking much vain trouble to recover the one or the other. He had visited Jasper while that gentleman lodged in St. James's, but the moment he hinted at the return of the £100, Mr. Losely opened both door and window, and requested the manager to make his immediate choice of the two. Taking the more usual mode of exit, Mr. Rugge vented his just indignation in a lawyer's letter, threatening Mr. Losely with an action for conspiracy and fraud. He had also more than once visited Mrs. Crane, who somewhat soothed him by allowing that he had been very badly used, that he ought at least to be repaid his money, and promising to do her best to persuade Mr. Losely to "behave like a gentleman." With regard to Sophy herself, Mrs. Crane appeared to feel a profound indifference. In fact, the hatred which Mrs. Crane had unquestionably conceived for Sophy while under her charge, was much dimin-

ished by Losely's unnatural conduct towards the child. To her it was probably a matter of no interest whether Sophy was in Rugge's hands or Waife's; enough for her that the daughter of a woman against whose memory her fiercest passions were enlisted was, in either case, so far below herself in the grades of the social ladder.

Perhaps of the two protectors for Sophy—Rugge and Waife—her spite alone would have given the preference to Waife. He was on a still lower step of the ladder than the itinerant manager. Nor, though she had so mortally injured the forlorn cripple in the eyes of Mr. Hartopp, had she any deliberate purpose of revenge to gratify against *him!* On the contrary, if she viewed him with contempt, it was a contempt not unmixed with pity. It was necessary to make to the Mayor the communications she had made, or that worthy magistrate would not have surrendered the child intrusted to him, at least until Waife's return. And really it was a kindness to the old man to save him both from an agonizing scene with Jasper, and from the more public opprobrium which any resistance on his part to Jasper's authority, or any altercation between the two, would occasion. And as her main object then was to secure Losely's allegiance to her, by proving her power to be useful to him, so Waife's and Sophys, and Mayors, and Managers, were to her but as pawns to be moved and sacrificed, according to the leading strategy of her game.

Rugge came now, agitated and breathless, to inform Mrs. Crane that Waife had been seen in London. Mr. Rugge's clown had seen him, not from the Tower; but the cripple had disappeared before the clown, who was on the top of an omnibus, had time to descend. "And even if he had actually caught hold of Mr. Waife," observed Mrs. Crane, "what then? You have no claim on Mr. Waife."

"But the Phenomenon must be with that ravishing marauder," said Rugge. "However, I have set a minister of justice—that is, ma'am, a detective police—at work; and what I now ask of you is simply this: should it be necessary for Mr. Losely to appear with me before the senate—that is to say, ma'am, a metropolitan police-court—in order to prove my legal property in my own bought and paid-for Phenomenon, will you induce that bold bad man not again to return the poisoned chalice to my lips?"

"I do not even know where Mr. Losely is—perhaps not in London."

"Ma'am, I saw him last night at the theatre—Princess's. I was in the shilling gallery. He who owes me £100, ma'am, he in a private box!"

"Ah! you are sure; by himself?"

"With a lady, ma'am—a lady in a shawl from Ingee. I know them shawls. My father taught me to know them in early childhood, for he was an ornament to British commerce—a broker, ma'am—pawn! And," continued Rugge, with a withering smile, "that man in a private box, which at the Princess's costs two pounds two, and with the spoils of Ingee by his side, lifted his eye-glass and beheld me—me in the shilling gallery!—and his conscience did not say 'should we not change places if I paid that gentleman £100?' Can such things be, and overcome us, ma'am, like a summer cloud, without our special—I put it to you, ma'am—wonder?"

"Oh, with a lady, was he?" exclaimed Arabella Crane—her wrath, which, while the manager spoke, gathered fast and full, bursting now into words: "His ladies shall know the man who sells his own child for a show; only find out where the girl is, then come here again before you stir further. Oh, with a lady! Go to your detective policeman, or rather, send him to me; we will first discover Mr. Losely's address. I will pay all the expenses. Rely on my zeal, Mr. Rugge."

Much comforted, the manager went his way. He had not been long gone before Jasper himself appeared. The traitor entered with a more than customary bravado of manner, as if he apprehended a scolding, and was prepared to face it; but Mrs. Crane neither reproached him for his prolonged absence, nor expressed surprise at his return. With true feminine duplicity, she received him as if nothing had happened. Jasper, thus relieved, became of his own accord apologetic and explanatory; evidently he wanted something of Mrs. Crane.

"The fact is, my dear friend," said he, sinking into a chair, "that the day after I last saw you, I happened to go to the General Post-Office to see if there were any letters for me. You smile—you don't believe me. Honor bright,—here they are," and Jasper took from

the side pocket of his coat a pocket-book—a new pocket-book—a brilliant pocket-book—fragrant Russian leather—delicately embossed—golden clasps—silken linings—jewelled pencil-case—malachite pen-knife—an arsenal of nicknacks stored in neat recesses; such a pocket-book as no man ever gives to himself. Sardanapalus would not have given that pocket-book to himself! Such a pocket-book never comes to you, oh enviable Lotharios, save as tributary keepsakes from the charmers who adore you! Grimly the Adopted Mother eyed that pocket-book. Never had she seen it before. Grimly she pinched her lips. Out of this dainty volume—which would have been of cumbrous size to a slim thread-paper exquisite, but scarcely bulged into ripple the Atlantic expause of Jasper Loseiy's magnificent chest—the monster drew forth two letters on French paper—foreign post-marks.

He replaced them quickly, only suffering her eye to glance at the address, and continued: "Fancy! that purse-proud Grand Turk of an infidel, though he would not believe me, has been to France—yes, actually to * * * * making inquiries evidently with reference to Sophy. The woman who ought to have thoroughly converted him took flight, however, and missed seeing him. Confound her! I ought to have been there. So I have no doubt for the present the Pagan remains stubborn. Gone on into Italy, I hear; doing me, violating the laws of nature, and roving about the world, with his own solitary hands in his bottomless pockets,—like the Wandering Jew! But, as some slight set-off in my run of ill-luck, I find at the post-office a pleasanter letter than the one which brings me this news: A rich elderly lady, who has no family, wants to adopt a nice child, will take Sophy; make it worth my while to let her have Sophy. 'Tis convenient in a thousand ways to settle one's child comfortably in a rich house—establishes rights, subject, of couse, to *cheques* which would not affront *me*—a Father! But the first thing requisite is to catch Sophy; 'tis in that I ask your help—you are so clever. Best of creatures! what could I do without you? As you say, whenever I want a friend I come to you—Bella!"

Mrs. Crane surveyed Jasper's face deliberately. It is strange how much more readily women read the thoughts of men than men detect those of women. "You know where the child is," said she slowly.

"Well, I take it for granted she is with the old man; and I have seen him—seen him yesterday."

"Go on; you saw him—where?"

"Near London Bridge."

"What business could you possibly have in that direction! Ah! I guess, the railway station—to Dover—you are going abroad?"

"No such thing—you are so horribly suspicious. But it is true I had been to the station inquiring after some luggage or parcels which a friend of mine had ordered to be left there—now, don't interrupt me. At the foot of the bridge I caught a sudden glimpse of the old man—changed—altered—aged—one eye lost. You had said I should not know him again, but I did; I should never have recognized his face. I knew him by the build of the shoulder—a certain turn of the arms—I don't know what; one knows a man familiar to one from birth without seeing his face. Oh, Bella! I declare that I felt as soft—as soft as the silliest muff who ever—" Jasper did not complete his comparison, but paused a moment, breathing hard, and then broke into another sentence. "He was selling something in a basket—matches, boot-straps, deuce knows what. He! a clever man, too! I should have liked to drop into that d—d basket all the money I had about me."

"Why did you not?"

"Why? How could I? He would have recognized me. There would have been a scene—a row—a flare up—a mob round us, I dare say. I had no idea it would so upset me; to see him selling matches, too; glad we did not meet at Gatesboro'. Not even for that £100 do I think I could have faced him. No—as he said when we last parted, 'The world is wide enough for both.' Give me some brandy—thank you."

"You did not speak to the old man—he did not see you—but you wanted to get back the child; you felt sure she must be with him; you followed him home?"

"I? No; I should have had to wait for hours. A man like me, loitering about London Bridge!—I should have been too conspicuous—he would have soon caught sight of me, though I kept on his blind side. I employed a ragged boy to watch and follow him, and

here is the address. Now, will you get Sophy back for me without any trouble to me, without my appearing? I would rather charge a regiment of horse-guards than bully that old man."

"Yet you would rob him of the child—his sole comfort?"

"Bother!" cried Losely, impatiently: "the child can be only a burthen to him; well out of his way; 'tis for the sake of that child he is selling matches! It would be the greatest charity we could do him to set him free from that child sponging on him, dragging him down; without her he'd find a way to shift for himself. Why, he's even cleverer than I am! And there—there—give him this money, but don't say it came from me."

He thrust, without counting, several sovereigns—at least twelve or fourteen—into Mrs. Crane's palm; and so powerful a charm has goodness the very least, even in natures the most evil, that that unusual, eccentric, inconsistent gleam of human pity in Jasper Losely's benighted soul, shed its relenting influence over the angry, wrathful, and vindictive feelings with which Mrs. Crane the moment before regarded the perfidious miscreant: and she gazed at him with a sort of melancholy wonder. What! though so little sympathizing with affection, that he could not comprehend that he was about to rob the old man of a comfort which no gold could repay—what! though so contemptuously callous to his own child—yet there in her hand lay the unmistakable token that a something of humanity, compunction, compassion, still lingered in the breast of the greedy cynic; and at that thought all that was softest in her own human nature moved towards him—indulgent—gentle. But in the rapid changes of the heart feminine, the very sentiment that touched upon love brought back the jealousy that bordered upon hate. How came he by so much money? more than, days ago, he, the insatiate spendthrift, had received for his task-work? And that POCKET-BOOK!

"You have suddenly grown rich, Jasper?"

For a moment he looked confused, but replied as he re-helped himself to the brandy, "Yes, *rouge-et-noir*—luck. Now, do go and see after this affair, that's a dear good woman. Get the child to-day if you can; I will call here in the evening."

"Should you take her, then, abroad at once to this worthy lady who will adopt her? If so, we shall meet, I suppose, no more; and I am assisting you to forget that I live still."

"Abroad—that crotchet of yours again. You are quite mistaken—in fact, the lady is in London. It was for her effects that I went to the station. Oh, don't be jealous—quite elderly."

"Jealous, my dear Jasper; you forget. I am as your mother. One of your letters, then, announced this lady's intended arrival; you were in correspondence with this—elderly lady?"

"Why, not exactly in correspondence. But when I left Paris I gave the General Post-Office as my address to a few friends in France. And this lady, who took an interest in my affairs (ladies, whether old or young, who have once known me, always do), was aware that I had expectations with respect to the child. So, some days ago, when I was so badly off, I wrote a line to tell her that Sophy had been no go, and that but for a dear friend (that is you), I might be on the *pavé*. In her answer, she said she should be in London as soon as I received her letter; and gave me an address here at which to learn where to find her when arrived—a good old soul, but strange to London. I have been very busy, helping her to find a house, recommending tradesmen, and so forth. She likes style, and can afford it. A pleasant house enough; but our quiet evenings here spoil me for anything else. Now get on your bonnet, and let me see you off."

"On one condition, my dear Jasper, that you stay here till I return."

Jasper made a wry face. But, as it was near dinner time, and he never wanted for appetite, he at length agreed to employ the interval of her absence in discussing a meal, which experience had told him Mrs. Crane's new cook would, not unskilfully, though hastily, prepare. Mrs. Crane left him to order the dinner, and put on her shawl and bonnet. But, gaining her own room, she rung for Bridget Greggs, and when that confidential servant appeared, she said: "In the side-pocket of Mr. Losely's coat there is a POCKET-BOOK; in it there are some letters which I must see. I shall appear to go out,—leave the street-door ajar, that I may slip in again unobserved. You will serve dinner as soon as possible. And when Mr. Losely, as usual, exchanges his

coat for the dressing-gown, contrive to take out that pocket-book unobserved by him. Bring it to me here, in this room: you can as easily replace it afterwards. A moment will suffice to my purpose.

Bridgett nodded, and understood. Jasper, standing by the window, saw Mrs. Crane leave the house, walking briskly. He then threw himself on the sofa, and began to doze: the doze deepened, and became sleep. Bridgett, entering to lay the cloth, so found him. She approached on tiptoe—sniffed the perfume of the pocket-book—saw its gilded corners peep forth from its lair. She hesitated—she trembled—she was in mortal fear of that truculent slumberer; but sleep lessens the awe thieves feel, or heroes inspire. She has taken the pocket-book—she has fled with the booty—she is in Mrs. Crane's apartment not five minutes after Mrs. Crane has regained its threshold.

Rapidly the jealous woman ransacked the pocket-book—started to see, elegantly worked with gold threads, in the lining, the words, "SOUVIENS-TOI DE TA GABRIELLE"—no other letters, save the two, of which Jasper had vouchsafed to her but the glimpse. Over these she hurried her glittering eyes; and when she restored them to their place, and gave back the book to Bridgett, who stood by breathless and listening, lest Jasper should awake, her face was colorless, and a kind of shudder seemed to come over her. Left alone, she rested her face on her hand, her lips moving as if in self-commune. Then noiselessly she glided down the stairs, regained the street, and hurried fast upon her way.

Bridgett was not in time to restore the book to Jasper's pocket, for when she re-entered he was turning round and stretching himself between sleep and waking. But she dropped the book skilfully on the floor, close beside the sofa: it would seem to him, on waking, to have fallen out of the pocket in the natural movements of sleep.

And, in fact, when he rose, dinner now on the table, he picked up the pocket-book without suspicion. But it was lucky that Bridgett had not waited for the opportunity suggested by her mistress. For when Jasper put on the dressing-gown, he observed that his coat wanted brushing; and, in giving it to the servant for that purpose, he used the precaution of taking out the pocket-book, and placing it in some other receptacle of his dress.

Mrs. Crane returned in less than two hours—returned with a disappointed look, which at once prepared Jasper for the intelligence that the birds to be entrapped had flown.

"They went away this afternoon," said Mrs. Crane, tossing Jasper's sovereigns on the table as if they burned her fingers. "But leave the fugitives to me. I will find them."

Jasper relieved his angry mind by a series of guilty but meaningless expletives; and then, seeing no farther use to which Mrs. Crane's wits could be applied at present, finished the remainder of her brandy, and wished her good-night, with a promise to call again, but without any intimation of his own address. As soon as he was gone, Mrs. Crane once more summoned Bridgett.

"You told me last week that your brother-in-law, Simpson, wished to go to America, that he had the offer of employment there, but that he could not afford the fare of the voyage. I promised I would help him if it was a service to you."

"You are a hangel, Miss!" exclaimed Bridgett, dropping a low curtsy—so low that it seemed as if she was going on her knees. "And may you have your deserts in the next blessed world, where there are no black-hearted villings."

"Enough, enough," said Mrs. Crane, recoiling perhaps from that grateful benediction. "You have been faithful to me, as none else have ever been; but this time I do not serve you in return so much as I meant to do. The service is reciprocal, if your brother-in-law will do me a favor. He takes with him his daughter, a mere child. Bridgett, let them enter their names on the steam-vessel as William and Sophy Waife; they can, of course, resume their own name when the voyage is over. There is the fare for them, and something more. Pooh, no thanks. I can spare the money. See your brother-in-law the first thing in the morning; and remember they go by the next vessel, which sails from Liverpool on Thursday."

CHAPTER XVI.

Those poor Pocket-Cannibals, how Society does persecute them! Even a menial servant would give warning if disturbed at his meals. But your Man-eater is the meekest of creatures; he will never give warning, and—not often take it.

WHATEVER the source that had supplied Jasper Losely with the money, from which he had so generously extracted the sovereigns intended to console Waife for the loss of Sophy, that source either dried up, or became wholly inadequate to his wants. For elasticity was the felicitous peculiarity of Mr. Losely's wants. They accomodated themselves to the state of his finances with mathematical precision, always requiring exactly five times the amount of the means placed at his disposal. From a shilling to a million, multiply his wants by five times the total of his means, and you arrived at a just conclusion.

Jasper called upon Poole, who was slowly recovering, but unable to leave his room; and finding that gentleman in a more melancholy state of mind than usual, occasioned by Uncle Sam's brutal declaration, "that if responsible for his godson's sins, he was not responsible for his debts," and that he really thought "the best thing Samuel Dolly could do, was to go to prison for a short time, and get white-washed," Jasper began to lament his own hard fate: "And just when one of the finest women in Paris has come here on purpose to see me," said the lady-killer,—"a lady who keeps her carriage, Dolly! Would have introduced you, if you had been well enough to go out. One can't be always borrowing of her. I wish one could. There's Mother Crane, would sell her gown off her back for me; but 'Gad, sir, she snubs, and positively frightens me. Besides, she lays traps to demean me—set me to work like a clerk!—not that I would hurt your feelings, Dolly,—if you are a clerk, or something of that sort, you are a gentleman at heart. Well, then, we are both done up and cleaned out; and my decided opinion is, that nothing is left but a bold stroke."

"I have no objection to bold strokes, but I don't see any; and Uncle Sam's bold stroke of the Fleet prison is not at all to my taste."

"Fleet prison! Fleet fiddlestick! No. You have never been in Russia? Why should we not go there both? My Paris friend, Madame Caumartin, was going to Italy, but her plans are changed, and she is now all for St. Petersburgh. She will wait a few days for you to get well. We will all go together and enjoy ourselves. The Russians doat upon whist. We shall get into their swell sets and live like princes." Therewith Jasper launched forth on the text of Russian existence in such glowing terms that Dolly Poole shut his aching eyes and fancied himself sledging down the Neva, covered with furs—a Countess waiting for him at dinner, and Counts in dozens ready to offer bets to a fabulous amount, that Jasper Losely lost the rubber.

Having lifted his friend into this region of aerial castles, Jasper then, descending into the practical world, wound up with the mournful fact, that one could not get to St. Petersburg, nor, when there, into swell sets, without having some little capital on hand.

"I tell you what we will do. Madame Caumartin lives in prime style. Get old Latham, your employer, to discount her bill at three months' date for £500, and we will be all off in a crack." Poole shook his head. "Old Latham is too knowing a file for that.—A foreigner! He'd want security."

"I'll be security."

Dolly shook his head a second time, still more emphatically than the first.

"But you say he does discount paper—gets rich on it?"

"Yes, gets rich on it, which he might not do if he discounted the paper you propose. No offence."

"Oh, no offence among friends! You have taken him bills which he has discounted?"

"Yes—good paper."

"Any paper signed by good names is good paper. We can sign good names if we know their handwritings."

Dolly started, and turned white. Knave he was—cheat at cards, blackleg on the turf—but forgery! that crime was new to him. The very notion of it brought on a return of fever. And while Jasper was increasing his malady by arguing with his apprehensions, luckily for Poole, Uncle Sam came in. Uncle Sam, a sagacious old tradesman, no sooner clapped eyes on the brilliant Losely than he conceived for him a distrustful repugnance, similar to that with which an experienced gander may re-

gard a fox in colloquy with its gosling. He had already learned enough of his godson's ways, and chosen society, to be assured that Samuel Dolly had indulged in very anti-commercial tastes, and been sadly contaminated by very anti-commercial friends.

He felt persuaded that Dolly's sole chance of redemption was in working on his mind while his body was still suffering, so that Poole might, on recovery, break with all former associations. On seeing Jasper in the dress of an exquisite, with the thews of a prize-fighter, Uncle Sam saw the stalwart incarnation of all the sins which a godfather had vowed that a godson should renounce. Accordingly, he made himself so disagreeable, that Losely, in great disgust, took a hasty departure. And Uncle Sam, as he helped the nurse to plunge Dolly into his bed, had the brutality to tell his nephew, in very plain terms, that if ever he found that Brummagem gent in Poole's rooms again, Poole would never again see the color of Uncle Sam's money. Dolly beginning to blubber, the good man relenting, patted him on the back, and said: "But as soon as you are well, I'll carry you with me to my country box, and keep you out of harm's way till I find you a wife, who will comb your head for you,"—at which cheering prospect Poole blubbered more dolefully than before.

On retiring to his own lodging in the Gloucester Coffee-house, Uncle Sam, to make all sure, gave positive orders to Poole's landlady, who respected in Uncle Sam the man who might pay what Poole owed to her, on no account to let in any of Dolly's profligate friends, but especially the chap he had found there: adding, "'Tis as much as my nephew's life is worth; and, what is more to the purpose, as much as your bill is." Accordingly, when Jasper presented himself at Poole's door again that very evening, the landlady apprised him of her order; and proof to his insinuating remonstrances, closed the door in his face. But a French chronicler has recorded, that when Henry IV. was besieging Paris, though not a loaf of bread could enter the walls, love-letters passed between city and camp as easily as if there had been no siege at all. And does not Mercury preside over money as well as Love? Jasper, spurred on by Madame Caumartin, who was exceedingly anxious to exchange London for St. Petersburg as soon as possible, maintained a close and frequent correspondence with Poole by the agency of the nurse, who luckily was not above being bribed by shillings.

Poole continued to reject the villany proposed by Jasper; but, in course of the correspondence, he threw out rather incoherently —for his mind began somewhat to wander—a scheme equally flagitious, which Jasper, aided perhaps by Madame Caumartin's yet keener wit, caught up, and quickly reduced to deliberate method. Old Mr. Latham, amongst the bills he discounted, kept those of such more bashful customers as stipulated that their resort to temporary accommodation should be maintained a profound secret, in his own safe. Amongst these bills Poole knew that there was one for £1,000 given by a young nobleman of immense estates, but so entailed that he could neither sell or mortgage, and, therefore, often in need of a few hundreds for pocket-money. The nobleman's name stood high. His fortune was universally known; his honor unimpeachable. A bill of his any one would cash at sight. Could Poole but obtain that bill! It had, he believed, only a few weeks yet to run. Jasper or Madame Caumartin might get it discounted even by Lord ——'s own banker; and if that were too bold, by any professional bill-broker, and all three be off before a suspicion could arise. But to get at that safe, a false key might be necessary. Poole suggested a waxen impression of the lock.

Jasper sent him a readier contrivance—a queer-looking tool, that looked an instrument of torture. All now necessary was for Poole to recover sufficiently to return to business, and to get rid of Uncle Sam by a promise to run down to the country the moment Poole had conscientiously cleared some necessary arrears of work. While this correspondence went on, Jasper Losely shunned Mrs. Crane, and took his meals and spent his leisure hours with Madame Caumartin. He needed no dressing-gown and slippers to feel himself at home there. Madame Cumartin had really taken a showy house in a genteel street. Her own appearance was eminently what the French call *distinguée*. Drest to perfection from head to foot; neat and finished as an epigram. Her face, in shape, like a thoroughbred cobra-capella,—low smooth frontal, widening at the

summit; chin tapering, but jaw strong, teeth marvellously white, small, and with points sharp as those in the maw of the fish called the "Sea Devil;" eyes like dark emeralds, of which the pupils, when she was angry or when she was scheming, retreated upward towards the temples, emitting a luminous green ray that shot through space like the gleam that escapes from a dark lanthorn; complexion superlatively feminine—call it not pale but white, as if she lived on blanched almonds, peach-stones, and arsenic; hands so fine and so bloodless, with fingers so pointedly taper there seemed stings at their tips; manners of one who had ranged all ranks of society from highest to lowest, and duped the most wary in each of them.

Did she please it, a crown prince might have thought her youth must have passed in the chambers of porphyry! Did she please it, an old soldier would have sworn the creature had been a *vivandière*. In age, perhaps, bordering on forty. She looked younger, but had she been a hundred and twenty, she could not have been more wicked. Ah, happy indeed for Sophy, if it were to save her youth from ever being fostered in elegant buodoirs by those bloodless hands, that the crippled vagabond had borne her away from Arabella's less cruel unkindness; better far even Rugge's village stage; better far stealthy by-lanes, feigned names, and the erudite tricks of Sir Isaac!

But still it is due even to Jasper to state here, that in Losely's recent design to transfer Sophy from Waife's care to that of Madame Caumartin, the Sharper harbored no idea of a villany so execrable as the character of the *Parisienne* lead the jealous Arabella to suspect. His real object in getting the child at that time once more into his power was (whatever its nature) harmless compared with the mildest of Arabella's dark doubts. But still if Sophy *had* been regained, and the object, on regaining her, foiled (as it probably would have been), what *then* might have become of her;—lost, perhaps, for ever, to Waife—in a foreign land—and under such guardianship? Grave question, which Jasper Losely, who exercised so little foresight in the paramount question—viz., what some day or other would become of himself?—was not likely to rack his brains by conjecturing!

Meanwhile Mrs. Crane was vigilant. The detective police-officer sent to her by Mr. Rugge could not give her the information which Rugge desired, and which she did not longer need. She gave the detective some information respecting Madame Caumartin. One day towards the evening she was surprised by a visit from Uncle Sam. He called ostensibly to thank her for her kindness to his godson and nephew; and to beg her not to be offended if he had been rude to Mr. Losely, who, he understood from Dolly, was a particular friend of hers. "You see, ma'am, Samuel Dolly is a weak young man, and easily led astray; but, luckily for himself, he has no money and no stomach. So he may repent in time; and if I could find a wife to manage him, he has not a bad head for the main chance, and may become a practical man. Repeatedly I have told him he should go to prison, but that was only to frighten him,—fact is, I want to get him safe down into the country, and he don't take to that. So I am forced to say, 'My box, home-brewed and south-down, Samuel Dolly, or a Lunnon jail, and debtors' allowance.' Must give a young man his choice, my dear lady."

Mrs. Crane, observing that what he said was extremely sensible, Uncle Sam warmed in his confidence.

"And I thought I had him, till I found Mr. Losely in his sick-room; but ever since that day, I don't know how it is, the lad has had something on his mind, which I don't half like—cracky, I think, my dear lady—cracky. I suspect that old nurse passes letters. I taxed her with it, and she immediately wanted to take her Bible-oath, and smelt of gin—two things which, taken together, look guilty."

"But," said Mrs. Crane, growing much interested, "if Mr. Losely and Mr. Poole do correspond, what then?"

"That's what I want to know, ma'am. Excuse me; I don't wish to disparage Mr. Losely—a dashing gent, and nothing worse, I dare say. But certain sure I am that he has put into Samuel Dolly's head something which has cracked it! There is the lad now up and dressed, when he ought to be in bed, and swearing he'll go to old Latham's to-morrow, and that long arrears of work are on his conscience! Never heard him talk of conscience before—that looks guilty! And it does not

frighten him any longer when I say he shall go to prison for his debts; and he's very anxious to get me out of Lunnon; and when I threw in a word about Mr. Losely (slyly, my good lady—just to see its effect), he grew as white as that paper; and then he began strutting and swelling, and saying that Mr. Losely would be a great man, and that he should be a great man, and that he did not care for my money—he could get as much money as he liked. That looks guilty, my dear lady. And oh," cried Uncle Sam, clasping his hands, "I do fear that he's thinking of something worse than he has ever done before, and his brain can't stand it. And, ma'am, he has a great respect for you; and you've a friendship for Mr. Losely. Now, just suppose that Mr. Losely should have been thinking of what your flash sporting gents calls a harmless spree, and my sister's son should, being cracky, construe it into something criminal. Oh, Mrs. Crane, do go and see Mr. Losely, and tell him that Samuel Dolly is not safe—is not safe!"

"Much better that I should go to your nephew," said Mrs. Crane; "and with your leave I will do so at once. Let me see him alone. Where shall I find you afterwards?"

"At the Gloucester Coffee-house. Oh, my dear lady, how can I thank you enough! The boy can be nothing to you; but to me, he's my sister's son—the blackguard!"

CHAPTER XVII.

"Dices laborantes in uno
Penelopen vitreamque Circen."—HORAT.

MRS. CRANE found Poole in his little sitting-room, hung round with prints of opera-dancers, prize-fighters, race-horses, and the dog Billy. Samuel Dolly was in full dress. His cheeks, usually so pale, seemed much flushed. He was evidently in a state of high excitement, bowed extremely low to Mrs. Crane, called her Countess, asked if she had been lately on the Continent, and if she knew Madame Caumartin; and whether the nobility at St. Petersburg were jolly, or stuck-up fellows, who gave themselves airs;—not waiting for her answer. In fact his mind was unquestionably disordered.

Arabella Crane abruptly laid her hand on his shoulder. "You are going to the gallows," she said, suddenly. "Down on your knees and tell me all, and I will keep your secret, and save you; lie—and you are lost!"

Poole burst into tears, and dropped on his knees as he was told.

In ten minutes Mrs. Crane knew all that she cared to know, possessed herself of Losely's letters, and leaving Poole less light-headed and more light-hearted, she hastened to Uncle Sam at the Gloucester Coffee-house. "Take your nephew out of town this evening, and do not let him from your sight for the next six months. Hark you, he will never be a good man: but you may save him from the hulks. Do so. Take my advice." She was gone before Uncle Sam could answer.

She next proceeded to the private house of the detective with whom she had before conferred—this time less to give than to receive information. Not half an hour after her interview with him, Arabella Crane stood in the street wherein was placed the showy house of Madame Caumartin. The lamps in the street were now lighted—the street, even at day a quiet one, was comparatively deserted. All the windows in the Frenchwoman's house were closed with shutters and curtains, except on the drawing-room floor. From those the lights within streamed over a balcony filled with gay plants—one of the casements was partially open. And now and then, where the watcher stood, she could just catch the glimpse of a passing form behind the muslin draperies, or hear the sound of some louder laugh. In her dark grey dress, and still darker mantle, Arabella Crane stood motionless, her eyes fixed on those windows. The rare foot-passenger who brushed by her turned involuntarily to glance at the countenance of one so still, and then as involuntarily to survey the house to which that countenance was lifted.

No such observer so incurious as not to hazard conjecture what evil to that house was boded by the dark lurid eyes that watched it with so fixed a menace. Thus she remained, sometimes, indeed, moving from her post, as a sentry moves from his, slowly pacing a few steps to and fro, returning to the same place, and again motionless; thus she remained for hours. Evening deepened into night—night grew near to dawn; she was still there in that street, and still her eyes were on that house.

At length the door opened noiselessly—a tall man tripped forth with a gay light step, and humming the tune of a gay French *chanson*. As he came straight towards the spot where Arabella Crane was at watch, from her dark mantle stretched forth her long arm and lean hand, and seized him. He started, and recognized her.

"You here!" he exclaimed—"you!—at such an hour!—you!"

"I, Jasper Losely, here to warn you. To-morrow the officers of justice will be in that accursed house. To-morrow that woman—not for her worse crimes, they elude the law, but for her least, by which the law hunts her down—will be a prisoner——No—you shall not return to warn her as I warn you" (for Jasper here broke away, and retreated some steps towards the house); "or, if you do, share her fate. I cast you off."

"What do you mean?" said Jasper, halting, till with slow steps she regained his side. "Speak more plainly: if poor Madame Caumartin has got into a scrape, which I don't think likely, what have I to do with it?"

"The woman you call Caumartin fled from Paris to escape its tribunals. She has been tracked; the French government have claimed her—Ho!—you smile. This does not touch you?"

"Certainly not."

"But there are charges against her from English tradesmen; and if it be proved that you knew her in her proper name—the infamous Gabrielle Desmarets—if it be proved that you have passed off the French *billets de banque* that she stole—if you were her accomplice in obtaining goods under her false name—if you, enriched by her robberies, were aiding and abetting her as a swindler here, though you may be safe from the French law, will you be safe from the English? You may be innocent, Jasper Losely; if so, fear nothing. You may be guilty: if so, hide, or follow me!"

Jasper paused. His first impulse was to trust implicitly to Mrs. Crane, and lose not a moment in profiting by such counsels of concealment or flight as an intelligence so superior to his own could suggest. But suddenly remembering that Poole had undertaken to get the bill for £1,000 by the next day—that if flight were necessary, there was yet a chance of flight with booty—his constitutional hardihood, and the grasping cupidity by which it was accompanied, made him resolve at least to hazard the delay of a few hours. And after all, might not Mrs. Crane exaggerate? Was not this the counsel of a jealous woman? "Pray," said he, moving on, and fixing quick keen eyes on her as she walked by his side—"pray, how did you learn all these particulars?"

"From a detective policeman employed to discover Sophy. In conferring with him, the name of Jasper Losely as her legal protector was of course stated: that name was already coupled with the name of the false Caumartin. Thus, indirectly, the child you would have consigned to that woman, saves you from sharing that woman's ignominy and doom."

"Stuff!" said Jasper stubbornly, though he winced at her words: "I don't, on reflection, see that anything can be proved against me. I am not bound to know why a lady changes her name, nor how she comes by her money. And as to her credit with tradesmen—nothing to speak of; most of what she has got is paid for—what is not paid for, is less than the worth of her goods. Pooh! I am not so easily frightened—much obliged to you all the same. Go home now; 'tis horridly late. Good-night, or rather good-morning."

Jasper, mark me, if you see that woman again—if you attempt to save or screen her—I shall know, and you lose in me your last friend—last hope—last plank in a devouring sea!"

These words were so solemnly uttered that they thrilled the heart of the reckless man. "I have no wish to screen or save her," he said with selfish sincerity. "And after what you have said, I would as soon enter a fireship as that house. But let me have some hours to consider what is best to be done."

"Yes, consider—I shall expect you to-morrow."

He went his way up the twilight streets towards a new lodging he had hired not far from the showy house. She drew her mantle closer round her gaunt figure, and, taking the opposite direction, threaded thoroughfares yet lonelier, till she gained her door, and was welcomed back by the faithful Bridgett.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Hope tells a flattering tale to Mr. Rugge. He is undeceived by a Solicitor; and left to mourn; but in turn, though unconsciously, Mr. Rugge deceives the Solicitor, and the Solicitor deceives his client,—which is 6*s.* 8*d.* in the Solicitor's pocket.

THE next morning Arabella Crane was scarcely dressed before Mr. Rugge knocked at her door. On the previous day the detective had informed him that William and Sophy Waife were discovered to have sailed for America. Frantic the unhappy manager hurried away to the steam-packet office, and was favored by an inspection of the books, which confirmed the hateful tidings. As if in mockery of his bereaved and defrauded state, on returning home he found a polite note from Mr. Gotobed, requesting him to call at the office of that eminent solicitor, with reference to a young actress named Sophy Waife, and hinting "that the visit might prove to his advantage!" Dreaming for a wild moment that Mr. Losely, conscience-stricken, might through this solicitor pay back his £100, he rushed incontinent to Mr. Gotobed's office, and was at once admitted into the presence of that stately practitioner.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Mr. Gotobed with formal politeness, "but I heard a day or two ago accidentally from my head-clerk, who had learned it also accidentally from a sporting friend, that you were exhibiting at Humberstone, during the race-week, a young actress, named on the play-bills (here is one) 'Juliet Araminta,' and whom, as I am informed, you had previously exhibited in Surrey and elsewhere; but she was supposed to have relinquished that earlier engagement, and left your stage with her grandfather, William Waife. I am instructed by a distinguished client, who is wealthy, and who, from motives of mere benevolence, interests himself in the said William and Sophy Waife, to discover their residence. Please, therefore, to render up the child to my charge, apprising me also of the address of her grandfather, if he be not with you; and without waiting for further instructions from my client, who is abroad, I will venture to say that any sacrifice in the loss of your juvenile actress will be most liberally compensated."

"Sir," cried the miserable and imprudent Rugge, "I paid £100 for that fiendish child—a three years' engagement—and I have been robbed. Restore me the £100, and I will tell you where she is, and her vile grandfather also."

At hearing so bad a character lavished upon objects recommended to his client's disinterested charity, the wary solicitor drew in his pecuniary horns.

"Mr. Rugge," said he, "I understand from your words that you cannot place the child Sophy, *alias* Juliet Araminta, in my hands. You ask me £100 to inform me where she is. Have you a lawful claim on her?"

"Certainly, sir; she is my property."

"Then it is quite clear that though you may know where she is, you cannot get at her yourself, and cannot therefore, place her in my hands. Perhaps she is—in heaven!"

"Confound her, sir! no—in America! or on the seas to it."

"Are you sure?"

"I have just come from the steam-packet office, and seen the names in their book. William and Sophy Waife sailed from Liverpool last Thursday week."

"And they formed an engagement with you—received your money; broke the one, absconded with the other. Bad characters indeed!"

"Bad! you may well say that—a set of swindling scoundrels, the whole kit and kin. And the ingratitude!" continued Rugge: "I was more than a father to that child" (he began to whimper): "I had a babe of my own once—died of convulsions in teething. I thought that child would have supplied its place, and I dreamed of the York Theatre; but"—here his voice was lost in the folds of a marvellously dirty red pocket-handkerchief.

Mr. Gotobed having now, however, learned all that he cared to learn, and not being a soft-hearted man (first-rate solicitors rarely are), here pulled out his watch, and said—

"Sir, you have been very ill-treated, I perceive. I must wish you good-day; I have an engagement in the City. I cannot help you back to your £100, but accept this trifle (a £5 note) for your loss of time in calling" (ringing the bell violently). "Door—show out this gentleman."

That evening Mr. Gotobed wrote at length to Guy Darrell, informing him that, after

great pains and prolonged research, he had been so fortunate as to ascertain that the strolling player and little girl whom Mr. Darrell had so benevolently requested him to look up, were very bad characters, and had left the country for the United States, as, happily for England, bad characters were wont to do.

That letter reached Guy Darrell when he was far away, amidst the forlorn pomp of some old Italian city, and Lionel's tale of the little girl not very fresh in his gloomy thoughts. Naturally, he supposed that the boy had been duped by a pretty face and his own inexperienced kindly heart: And so and so—why, so end half the efforts of men who intrust to others the troublesome execution of humane intentions! The scales of earthly justice are poised in their quivering equilibrium, not by huge hundred-weights, but by infinitesimal grains, needing the most wary caution—the most considerate patience—the most delicate touch, to arrange or readjust. Few of our errors, national or individual, come from the design to be unjust—most of them from sloth, or incapacity to grapple with the difficulties of being just. Sins of commission may not, perhaps, shock the retrospect of conscience. Large and obtrusive to view, we have confessed, mourned, repented, possibly atoned them. Sins of omission, so veiled amidst our hourly emotions—blent, confused, unseen, in the conventional routine of existence;—Alas! could *these* suddenly emerge from their shadow, group together in serried mass and accusing order—alas, alas! would not the best of us then start in dismay, and would not the proudest humble himself at the Throne of Mercy!

CHAPTER XIX.

Joy, nevertheless, does return to Mr. Rugge; and Hope now inflicts herself on Mrs. Crane. A very fine-looking Hope, too—six feet one—strong as Achilles, and as fleet of foot.

BUT we have left Mr. Rugge at Mrs. Crane's door; admit him. He bursts into her drawing-room, wiping his brows.

"Ma'am, they're off to America!—"

"So I have heard. You are fairly entitled to the return of your money—"

"Entitled, of course—but—"

"There it is; restore to me the contract for the child's services."

Rugge gazed on a roll of bank-notes, and could scarcely believe his eyes. He darted forth his hand, the notes receded like the dagger in Macbeth—"First the contract," said Mrs. Crane. Rugge drew out his greasy pocket-book, and extracted the worthless engagement.

"Henceforth, then," said Mrs. Crane, "you have no right to complain; and whether or not the girl ever again fall in your way, your claim over her ceases."

"The gods be praised! it does, ma'am; I have had quite enough of her. But you are every inch a lady, and allow me to add, that I put you on my free list for life."

Rugge gone; Arabella Crane summoned Bridgett to her presence.

"Lor, miss," cried Bridgett, impulsively, "who'd think you'd been up all night raking! I have not seen you look so well this many a year."

"Ah," said Arabella Crane, "I will tell you why. I have done what for many a year I never thought I should do again—a good action. That child—that Sophy—you remember how cruelly I used her?"

"Oh, miss, don't go for to blame yourself; you fed her, you clothed her, when her own father, the villing, sent her away from hisself to you—you of all people—*you*. How could *you* be carressing and fawning on his child—their child?"

Mrs. Crane hung her head gloomily. "What is past is past. I have lived to save that child, and a curse seems lifted from my soul. Now listen. I shall leave London—England, probably this evening. You will keep this house; it will be ready for me any moment I return. The agent who collects my house-rents will give you money as you want it. Stint not yourself, Bridgett. I have been saving, and saving, and saving, for dreary years—nothing else to interest me—and I am richer than I seem."

"But where are you going, miss?" said Bridgett, slowly recovering from the stupefaction occasioned by her mistress's announcement.

"I don't know—I don't care."

"Oh, gracious stars! is it with that dreadful Jasper Losely?—it is, it is. You are crazed, you are bewitched, miss!"

"Possibly I am crazed—possibly bewitched; but I take that man's life to mine as a penance for all the evil mine has ever known; and a day or two since I should have said, with rage and shame, 'I cannot help it; I loathe myself that I can care what becomes of him.' Now, without rage, without shame, I say, 'The man whom I once so loved shall not die on a gibbet if I can help it; and, please Heaven, help it I will.'"

The grim woman folded her arms on her breast, and raising her head to its full height, there was in her face and air a stern gloomy grandeur, which could not have been seen without a mixed sensation of compassion and awe.

"Go, now, Bridgett; I have said all. He will be here soon; he will come—he must come — he has no choice; and then — and then—" she closed her eyes, bowed her head, and shivered.

Arabella Crane was as usual, right in her predictions. Before noon Jasper came—came, not with his jocund swagger, but with that side-long sinister look—look of the man whom the world cuts—triumphantly restored to its former place in his visage. Madame Caumarin had been arrested; Poole had gone into the country with Uncle Sam; Jasper had seen a police-officer at the door of his own lodgings. He slunk away from the fashionable thoroughfares—slunk to the recesses of Podden Place—slunk into Arabella Crane's prim drawing-room, and said, sullenly, "All is up; here I am!"

Three days afterwards, in a quiet street in a quiet town of Belgium—wherein a sharper, striving to live by his profession, would soon become a skeleton—in a commodious airy apartment, looking upon a magnificent street, the reverse of noisy, Jasper Losely sat secure, innocuous, and profoundly miserable. In another house, the windows of which—facing those of Jasper's sitting-room, from an upper story—commanded so good a view therein that it placed him under a surveillance akin to that designed by Mr. Bentham's reformatory Panopticon, sat Arabella Crane. Whatever her real feelings towards Jasper Losely (and what those feelings were no virile pen can presume authoritatively to define; for lived there ever a man who thoroughly—thoroughly understood a woman?) or whatever in earlier life might have been their reciprocated vows of eternal love—not only from the day that Jasper, on his return to his native shores, presented himself in Podden Place, had their intimacy been restricted to the austerest bonds of friendship, but after Jasper had so rudely declined the hand which now fed him, Arabella Crane had probably perceived that her sole chance of retaining intellectual power over his lawless being, necessitated the utter relinquishment of every hope or project that could expose her again to his contempt.

Suiting appearances to reality, the decorum of a separate house was essential to the maintenance of that authority with which the rigid nature of their intercourse invested her. The additional cost strained her pecuniary resources, but she saved in her own accommodation in order to leave Jasper no cause to complain of any stinting in his. There, then, she sate by her window, herself unseen, eyeing him in his opposite solitude, accepting for her own life a barren sacrifice, but a jealous sentinel on his. Meditating as she sate, and as she eyed him—meditating what employment she could invent, with the bribe of emoluments to be paid furtively by her, for those strong hands that could have felled an ox, but were nerveless in turning an honest penny—and for that restless mind, hungering for occupation, with the digestion of an ostrich for dice and debauch, riot and fraud, but queasy as an exhausted dyspeptic at the reception of one innocent amusement, one honorable toil. But while that woman still schemes how to rescue from hulks or halter that execrable man, who shall say that he is without a chance? A chance he has—WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?

BOOK FIFTH.

CHAPTER I.

Envy will be a science when it learns the use of the microscope.

When leaves fall and flowers fade, great people are found in their country-seats. Look! —that is Montfort Court. A place of regal magnificence, so far as extent of pile and amplitude of domain could satisfy the pride of ownership, or inspire the visitor with the respect due to wealth and power. An artist could have made nothing of it. The Sumptuous everywhere—the Picturesque nowhere. The House was built in the reign of George I., when first commenced that horror of the beautiful, as something in bad taste, which, agreeably to our natural love of progress, progressively advanced through the reigns of succeeding Georges. An enormous *façade*—in dull-brown brick—two wings and a centre, with double flights of steps to the hall-door from the carriage sweep. No trees allowed to grow too near the house; in front, a stately flat with stone balustrades. But wherever the eye turned, there was nothing to be seen but park —miles upon miles of park; not a cornfield in sight—not a roof-tree — not a spire — only those *lata silentia*—still widths of turf, and, somewhat thinly scattered and afar, those groves of giant trees.

The whole prospect so vast and so monotonous that it never tempted you to take a walk. No close-neighboring poetic thicket into which to plunge uncertain whether you would emerge; no devious stream to follow. The very deer, fat and heavy, seemed bored by pastures it would take them a week to traverse. People of moderate wishes and modest fortunes never envied Montfort Court, they admired it—they were proud to say they had seen it. But never did they say,

"Oh, that for me some home like this would smile!"

Not so, very—*very* great people!—*they* rather coveted than admired. Those oak trees so large, yet so undecayed—that park, eighteen miles at least in circumference—that solid palace which, without inconvenience, could entertain and stow away a king and his whole court; in short, all that evidence of a princely territory, and a weighty rent-roll, made English dukes respectfully envious, and foreign potentates gratifyingly jealous.

But turn from the front. Open the gate in that stone balustrade. Come southward to the garden side of the house. Lady Montfort's flower-garden. Yes; not so dull!—flowers, even autumnal flowers, enliven any sward. Still, on so large a scale, and so little relief; so little mystery about those broad gravel-walks; not a winding alley anywhere. Oh for a vulgar summer-house; for some alcove, all honey-suckle and ivy! But the dahlias are splendid! Very true; only, dahlias, at the best, are such uninteresting prosy things. What poet ever wrote upon a dahlia! Surely Lady Montfort might have introduced a little more taste here—shown a little more fancy! Lady Montfort! I should like to see my lord's face, if Lady Montfort took any such liberty. But there is Lady Montfort walking slowly along that broad, broad, broad gravel-walk—those splendid dahlias, on either side, in their set parterres. There she walks, in full evidence from all those sixty remorseless windows on the garden front, each window exactly like the other. There she walks, looking wistfully to the far end—('tis a long way off)—where, happily, there is a wicket that carries a persevering pedestrian out of sight of the sixty windows, into shady walks, towards the banks of that immense piece of water, two miles from the house. My lord has not returned from his moor in Scotland—my lady is alone. No company in the house

—it is like saying, "No acquaintance in a city. But the retinue in full. Though she dined alone, she might, had she pleased, have had almost as many servants to gaze upon her as there were windows now staring at her lonely walk, with their glassy spectral eyes.

Just as Lady Montfort gains the wicket she is overtaken by a visitor, walking fast from the gravel sweep by the front door, where he has dismounted—where he has caught sight of her; any one so dismounting might have caught sight of her—could not help it. Gardens so fine, were made on purpose for fine persons walking in them to be seen.

"Ah, Lady Montfort," said the visitor, stammering painfully, "I am so glad to find you at home."

"At home, George!" said the lady, extending her hand; "where else is it likely that I should be found? But how pale you are. What has happened?"

She seated herself on a bench, under a cedar-tree, just without the wicket, and George Morley, our old friend the Oxonian, seated himself by her side familiarly, but with a certain reverence. Lady Montfort was a few years older than himself—his cousin—he had known her from his childhood.

"What has happened!" he repeated; "nothing new. I have just come from visiting the good bishop."

"He does not hesitate to ordain you?"

"No—but I shall never ask him to do so."

"My dear cousin, are you not over-scrupulous? You would be an ornament to the Church, sufficient in all else to justify your compulsory omission of one duty, which a curate could perform for you."

Morley shook his head sadly. "One duty omitted!" said he. "But is it not that duty which distinguishes the priest from the layman? and how far extends that duty? Wherever there needs a voice to speak the Word—not in the pulpit only, but at the hearth, by the sick-bed—*there* should be the Pastor! No—I cannot, I ought not, I dare not! Incompetent as the laborer, how can I be worthy of the hire?" It took him long to bring out these words: his emotion increased his infirmity. Lady Montfort listened with an exquisite respect, visible in her compassion, and paused long before she answered.

George Morley was the younger son of a country gentleman, with a good estate settled upon the elder son. George's father had been an imtimate friend of his kinsman, the Marquess of Montfort (predecessor and grandsire of the present lord); and the Marquess had, as he thought, amply provided for George in undertaking to secure to him, when of fitting age, the living of Humberston, the most lucrative preferment in his gift. The living had been held for the last fifteen years by an incumbent, now very old, upon the honorable understanding that it was to be resigned in favor of George, should George take orders. The young man from his earliest childhood thus destined to the Church, devoted to the prospect of that profession all his studies, all his thoughts. Not till he was sixteen did his infirmity of speech make itself seriously perceptible; and then elocution-masters undertook to cure it—they failed. But George's mind continued in the direction towards which it had been so systematically biassed. Entering Oxford, he became absorbed in its academical shades. Amidst his books he almost forgot the impediment of his speech. Shy, taciturn, and solitary, he mixed too little with others to have it much brought before his own notice. He carried off prizes—he took high honors. On leaving the university, a profound theologian—an enthusiastic churchman, filled with the most earnest sense of the pastor's solemn calling—he was thus complimentarily accosted by the Archimandrite of his college, "What a pity you cannot go into the Church!"

"Cannot—but I *am* going into the Church."

"You! is it possible? But, perhaps, you are sure of a living—"

"Yes—Humberston."

"An immense living, but a very large population. Certainly it is in the bishop's own discretionary power to ordain you, and for all the duties you can keep a curate. But—" the Don stopped short, and took snuff.

That "But" said as plainly as words could say, "It may be a good thing for you, but is it fair for the Church?"

So George Morley, at least, thought that "But" implied. His conscience took alarm. He was a thoroughly noble-hearted man, likely to be the more tender of conscience where tempted by worldly interests. With that living he was rich, without it very poor. But to give up a calling, to the idea of which he had at-

tached himself with all the force of a powerful and zealous nature, was to give up the whole scheme and dream of his existence. He remained irresolute for some time; at last he wrote to the present Lord Montfort, intimating his doubts, and relieving the Marquess from the engagement which his lordship's predecessor had made. The present Marquess was not a man capable of understanding such scruples.

But, luckily perhaps for George and for the Church, the larger affairs of the great house of Montfort were not administered by the Marquess. The parliamentary influences, the ecclesiastical preferments, together with the practical direction of minor agents to the vast and complicated estates attached to the title, were at that time under the direction of Mr. Carr Vipont, a powerful member of Parliament, and husband to that Lady Selina whose condescension had so disturbed the nerves of Frank Vance the artist. Mr. Carr Vipont governed this vice-royalty according to the rules and traditions by which the House of Montfort had become great and prosperous. For not only every state, but every great seignorial House has its hereditary maxims of policy; not less the House of Montfort than the House of Hapsburg. Now the House of Montfort made it a rule that all admitted to be members of the family should help each other; that the head of the House should never, if it could be avoided, suffer any of its branches to decay and whither into poverty. The House of Montfort also held it a duty to foster and make the most of every species of talent that could swell the influence or adorn the annals of the family. Having rank, having wealth, it sought also to secure intellect, and to knit together into solid union, throughout all ramifications of kinship and cousinhood, each variety of repute and power that could root the ancient tree more firmly in the land.

Agreeably to this traditional policy, Mr. Carr Vipont not only desired that a Vipont Morley should not lose a very good thing, but that a very good thing should not lose a Vipont Morley of high academical distinction—a Vipont Morley who might be a bishop: He therefore drew up an admirable letter, which the Marquess signed—that the Marquess should take the trouble of copying it was out of the question—wherein Lord Montfort was made to express great admiration of the disinterested delicacy of sentiment, which proved George Vipont Morley to be still more fitted to the cure of souls; and, placing rooms at Montfort Court at his service (the Marquess not being himself there at the moment), suggested that George should talk the matter over with the present incumbent of Humberston (that town was not many miles distant from Montfort Court), who, though he had no impediment in his speech, still never himself preached nor read prayers, owing to an affection of the trachea, and who was, nevertheless, a most efficient clergyman. George Morley, therefore, had gone down to Montfort Court some months ago, just after his interview with Mrs. Crane.

He had then accepted an invitation to spend a week or two with the Rev. Mr. Allsop, the Rector of Humberston—a clergyman of the old school, a fair scholar, a perfect gentleman, a man of the highest honor, good-natured, charitable, but who took pastoral duties much more easily than good clergymen of the new school—be they high or low—are disposed to do. Mr. Allsop, who was then in his eightieth year, a bachelor with a very good fortune of his own, was perfectly willing to fulfil the engagement on which he held his living, and render it up to George; but he was touched by the earnestness with which George assured him that at all events he would not consent to displace the venerable incumbent from a tenure he had so long and honorably held—and would wait till the living was vacated in the ordinary course of nature. Mr. Allsop conceived a warm affection for the young scholar. He had a grandniece staying with him on a visit, who less openly, but not less warmly, shared that affection; and with her George Morley fell shyly and timorously in love. With that living he would be rich enough to marry—without it, no. Without it he had nothing but a fellowship, which matrimony would forfeit, and the scanty portion of a country squire's young son.

The young lady herself was dowerless, for Allsop's fortune was so settled that no share of it would come to his grand-niece. Another reason for conscience to gulp down that unhappy impediment of speech! Certainly, during this visit, Morley's scruples relaxed; but when he returned home they came back with greater force than ever—with greater

force because he felt that now not only a spiritual ambition, but a human love was a casuist in favor of self-interest. He had returned on a visit to Humberston Rectory about a week previous to the date of this chapter—the niece was not there. Sternly he had forced himself to examine a little more closely into the condition of the flock which (if he accepted the charge) he would have to guide, and the duties that devolved upon a chief pastor in a populous trading town. He became appalled. Humberston, like most towns under the political influence of a great House, was rent by parties. One party, who succeeded in returning one of the two members for Parliament, all for the House of Montfort; the other party, who returned also their member, all against it. By one-half the town, whatever came from Montfort Court was sure to be regarded with a most malignant and destorted vision.

Meanwhile, though Mr. Allsop was popular with the higher classes, and with such of the extreme poor as his charity relieved, his pastoral influence generally was a dead letter. His curate who preached for him—a good young man, but extremely dull—was not one of those preachers who fill a church. Tradesmen wanted an excuse to stay away or choose another place of worship; and they contrived to hear some passage in the sermons, over which, while the curate mumbled, they habitually slept—that they declared to be "Puseyite." The church became deserted; and about the same time a very eloquent Dissenting minister appeared at Humberston, and even professed churchfolks went to hear him. George Morley, alas! perceived that at Humberston, if the Church there were to hold her own, a powerful and popular preacher was essentially required. His mind was now made up. At Carr Vipont's suggestion the bishop of the diocese being then at his palace, had sent to see him; and, while granting the force of his scruples, had yet said, "Mine is the main responsibility. But if you ask me to ordain you, I will do so without hesitation; for if the Church wants preachers, it also wants deep scholars and virtuous pastors."

Fresh from this interview, George Morley came to announce to Lady Montfort that his resolve was unshaken. She, I have said, paused long before she answered. "George," she began at last, in a voice so touchingly sweet that its very sound was balm to a wounded spirit—"I must not argue with you—I bow before the grandeur of your motives, and I will not say that you are not right. One thing I do feel, that if you thus sacrifice your inclinations and interests from scruples so pure and holy, you will never be pitied—you will never know regret. Poor or rich, single or wedded, a soul that so seeks to reflect heaven will be serene and blessed." Thus she continued to address him for some time, he all the while inexpressibly soothed and comforted; then gradually she insinuated hopes even of a worldly and temporal kind—literature was left to him—the scholar's pen, if not the preacher's voice. In literature he might make a career that would lead on to fortune. There were places also in the public service to which a defect in speech was no obstacle. She knew his secret, modest attachment; she alluded to it just enough to encourage constancy and rebuke despair. As she ceased, his admiring and grateful consciousness of his cousin's rare qualities changed the tide of his emotions towards her from himself, and he exclaimed with an earnestness that almost wholly subdued his stutter—

"What a counsellor you are!—what a soother! If Montfort were but less prosperous or more ambitious, what a treasure, either to console or to sustain, in a mind like yours!"

As those words were said, you might have seen at once why Lady Montfort was called haughty and reserved. Her lip seemed suddenly to snatch back its sweet smile—her dark eye, before so purely, softly friend-like, became coldly distant—the tones of her voice were not the same as she answered—

"Lord Montfort values me, as it is, far beyond my merits: far," she added, with a different intonation, gravely mournful.

"Forgive me; I have displeased you. I did not mean it. Heaven forbid that I should presume either to disparage Lord Montfort—or—or to—" he stopped short, saving the hiatus by a convenient stammer. "Only," he continued, after a pause, "only forgive me this once. Recollect I was a little boy when you were a young lady, and I have pelted you with snowballs, and called you 'Caroline.'" Lady Montfort suppressed a sigh, and gave

the young scholar back her gracious smile, but not a smile that would have permitted him to call her "Caroline" again. She remained, indeed, a little more distant than usual during the rest of their interview, which was not much prolonged; for Morley felt annoyed with himself that he had so indiscreetly offended her, and seized an excuse to escape. "By the by," said he, "I have a letter from Mr. Carr Vipont, asking me to give him a sketch for a Gothic bridge to the water yonder. I will, with your leave, walk down and look at the proposed site. Only do say that you forgive me."

"Forgive you, cousin George, oh yes. One word only—it is true you were a child still when I fancied I was a woman, and you have a right to talk to me upon all things, except those that relate to me and Lord Monfort; unless, indeed," she added with a bewitching half laugh, "unless you ever see cause to scold me, there. Good-bye, my cousin, and in turn forgive me, if I was so petulant. The Caroline you pelted with snowballs was always a wayward, impulsive creature, quick to take offence, to misunderstand, and—to repent."

Back into the broad, broad gravel-walk, walked, more slowly than before, Lady Montfort. Again the sixty ghastly windows stared at her with all their eyes—back from the gravel-walk, through a side-door into the pompous solitude of the stately house—across long chambers, where the mirrors reflected her form, and the huge chairs, in their flaunting damask and flaring gold, stood stiff on desolate floors—into her own private room—neither large nor splendid that; plain chintzes, quiet book shelves. She need not have been the Marchioness of Montfort to inhabit a room as pleasant and as luxurious.

And the rooms that she could only have owned as Marchioness, what were those worth to her happiness? I know not. "Nothing," fine ladies will perhaps answer. Yet those same fine ladies will contrive to dispose their daughters to answer, "All." In her own room Lady Montfort sunk on her chair; wearily—wearily she looked at the clock—wearily at the books on the shelves—at the harp near the window. Then she leant her face on her hand, and that face was so sad, and so humbly sad, that you would have wondered how any one could call Lady Montfort proud.

"Treasure! I—I! worthless, fickle, credulous fool!—I—I!"

The groom of the chambers entered with the letters by the afternoon post. That Great House contrived to worry itself with two posts a-day. A royal command to Windsor——

"I shall be more alone in a court than here," murmured Lady Montfort.

CHAPTER II.

Truly saith the proverb, "Much corn lies under the straw that is not seen."

MEANWHILE George Morley followed the long shady walk—very handsome walk, full of prize roses and rare exotics—artificially winding, too—walk so well kept that it took thirty-four men to keep it—noble walk, tiresome walk—till it brought him to the great piece of water, which, perhaps, four times in the year was visited by the great folks in the Great House. And being thus out of the immediate patronage of fashion, the great piece of water really looked natural—companionable, refreshing—you began to breathe—to unbutton your waistcoat, loosen your neckcloth — quote Chaucer, if you could recollect him, or Cowper, or Shakespeare, or Thomson's Seasons; in short, any scraps of verse that came into your head—as your feet grew joyously entangled with fern—as the trees grouped forest-like before and round you—trees which there, being out of sight, were allowed to grow too old to be worth five shillings a-piece, moss-grown, hollow-trunked, some pollarded—trees invaluable! Ha, the hare! How she scuds! See, the deer marching down to the water-side. What groves of bulrushes—islands of water-lily! And to throw a Gothic bridge there, bring a great gravel road over the bridge! Oh, shame, shame!

So would have said the scholar, for he had a true sentiment for nature, if the bridge had not clean gone out of his head.

Wandering alone, he came at last to the most umbrageous and sequestered bank of the wide water, closed round on every side by brushwood, or still, patriarchal trees.

Suddenly he arrested his steps—an idea

struck him—one of those odd, whimsical, grotesque ideas which often when we are alone come across us, even in our quietest or most anxious moods. Was his infirmity really incurable? Elocution-masters had said, "certainly not;" but they had done him no good. Yet had not the greatest orator the world ever knew a defect in utterance? He too, Demosthenes, had, no doubt, paid fees to elocution-masters, the best in Athens, where elocution-masters must have studied their art *ad unguem*, and the defect had baffled them. But did Demosthenes despair? No, he resolved to cure himself—How? Was it not one of his methods to fill his mouth with pebbles, and practise manfully to the roaring sea? George Morley had never tried the effect of pebbles. Was there any virtue in them? Why not try? No sea there, it is true; but a sea was only useful as representing the noise of a stormy democratic audience. To represent a peaceful congregation that still sheet of water would do as well. Pebbles there were in plenty just by that gravelly cove, near which a young pike lay sunning his green back.

Half in jest, half in earnest, the scholar picked up a handful of pebbles, wiped them from sand and mould, inserted them between his teeth cautiously, and looking round to assure himself that none were by, began an extempore discourse. So interested did he become in that classical experiment, that he might have tortured the air and astonished the magpies (three of whom from a neighboring thicket listened perfectly spell-bound) for more than half an hour, when, seized with shame at the ludicrous impotence of his exertions—with despair that so wretched a barrier should stand between his mind and its expression—he flung away the pebbles, and sinking on the ground, he fairly wept—wept like a baffled child.

The fact was, that Morley had really the temperament of an orator; he had the orator's gifts in warmth of passion, rush of thought, logical arrangement; there was in him the genius of a great preacher. He felt it—he knew it; and in that despair which only Genius knows, when some pitiful cause obstructs its energies and strikes down its powers—making a confidant of Solitude—he wept loud and freely.

"Do not despond, sir, I undertake to cure you," said a voice behind.

George started up in confusion; a man, elderly, but fresh and vigorous, stood beside him, in a light fustian jacket, a blue apron, and with rushes in his hands, which he continued to plait together nimbly and deftly as he bowed to the startled scholar.

"I was in the shade of the thicket yonder, sir; pardon me, I could not help hearing you."

The Oxonian rubbed his eyes, and stared at the man with a vague impression that he had seen him before When? Where?

"You can cure me," he stuttered out; "what of?—the folly of trying to speak in public. Thank you, I am cured."

"Nay, sir, you see before you a man who can make you a very good speaker. Your voice is naturally fine. I repeat, I can cure a defect which is not in the organ, but in the management!"

"You can!" you—who and what are you?"

"A basket-maker, sir; I hope for your custom."

"Surely this is not the first time I have seen you?"

"True, you once kindly suffered me to borrow a resting-place on your father's land. One good turn deserves another."

At that moment Sir Isaac peered through the brambles, and restored to his original whiteness, and relieved from his false, horned ears, marched gravely towards the water, sniffed at the scholar, slightly wagged his tail, and buried himself amongst the reeds in search of a water-rat he had therein disturbed a week before, and always expected to find again.

The sight of the dog immediately cleared up the cloud in the scholar's memory; but with recognition came back a keen curiosity and a sharp pang of remorse.

"And your little girl?" he asked, looking down abashed.

"Better than she was when we last met. Providence is so kind to us."

Poor Waife, he never guessed that to the person he thus revealed himself he owed the grief for Sophy's abduction. He divined no reason for the scholar's flushing cheek and embarrassed manner. "Yes, sir, we have just settled in this neighborhood. I have a pretty cottage yonder at the outskirts of the village, and near the park-pales. I recognized you at

once; and as I heard you just now, I called to mind that, when we met before, you said your calling should be the Church, were it not for your difficulty in utterance; and I said to myself, 'no bad things those pebbles, if his utterance were thick, which it is not;' and I have not a doubt, sir, that the true fault of Demosthenes, whom I presume you are imitating, was that he spoke through his nose."

"Eh!" said the scholar, "through his nose? I never knew that!—and I—"

"And you are trying to speak without lungs; that is, without air in them. You don't smoke, I presume?"

"No—certainly not."

"You must learn—speak between each slow puff of your pipe. All you want is time—time to quiet the nerves, time to think, time to breathe. The moment you begin to stammer—stop—fill the lungs thus, then try again! It is only a clever man who can learn to write; that is, to compose; but any fool can be taught to speak—Courage!"

"If you really can teach me," cried the learned man, forgetting all self-reproach for his betrayal of Waife to Mrs. Crane in the absorbing interest of the hope that sprang up within him—"If you can teach me—If I can but con—con—con—conq—"

"Slowly—slowly—breath and time; take a whiff from my pipe—that's right. Yes, you can conquer the impediment."

"Then I will be the best friend to you that man ever had. There's my hand on it."

"I take it, but I ask leave to change the parties in the contract. I don't want a friend, I don't deserve one. You'll be a friend to my little girl instead; and if ever I ask you to help me in aught for her welfare and happiness—"

"I will help, heart and soul; slight indeed any service to her or to you compared with such service to me. Free this wretched tongue from its stammer, and thought and zeal will not stammer whenever you say, 'Keep your promise.' I am so glad your little girl is still with you."

Waife looked surprised—"Is still with me!—why not?"

The scholar bit his tongue. That was not the moment to confess; it might destroy all Waife's confidence in him.—He would do so later.—"When shall I begin my lesson?"

"Now, if you like. But have you a book in your pocket?"

"I always have."

"Not Greek, I hope, sir?"

"No, a volume of Barrow's Sermons. Lord Chatham recommended those sermons to his great son as a study for eloquence."

"Good! Will you lend me the volume, sir? and now for it, listen to me—one sentence at a time—draw your breath when I do."

The three magpies pricked up their ears again, and, as they listened, marvelled much.

CHAPTER III.

Could we know by what strange circumstances a man's genius became prepared for practical success, we should discover that the most serviceable items in his education were never entered in the bills which his father paid for it.

At the end of the very first lesson, George Morley saw that all the elocution-masters to whose skill he had been consigned were blunderers in comparison to the basket-maker.

Waife did not puzzle him with scientific theories. All that the great comedian required of him was to observe and to imitate. Observation, imitation, lo! the ground-work of all art! the primal elements of all genius! Not there, indeed, to halt, but there ever to commence. What remains to carry on the intellect to mastery?—Two steps—to reflect, to reproduce. Observation, imitation, reflection, reproduction. In these stands a mind complete and consummate, fit to cope with all labor, achieve all success.

At the end of the first lesson George Morley felt that his cure was possible. Making an appointment for the next day at the same place, he came thither stealthily, and so on day by day. At the end of a week he felt that the cure was nearly certain; at the end of a month the cure was self-evident. He should live to preach the Word. True, that he practised incessantly in private. Not a moment in his waking hours that the one thought, one object, were absent from his mind; true, that with all his patience, all his toil, the obstacle was yet serious, might never be entirely overcome. Nervous hurry—rapidity of action—vehemence of feeling brought back, might, at unguarded

moments, always bring back the gasping breath —the emptied lungs—the struggling utterance. But the relapse—rarer and rarer now with each trial, would be at last scarce a drawback. "Nay," quoth Waife, "instead of a drawback, become but an orator, and you will convert a defect into a beauty."

Thus justly sanguine of the accomplishment of his life's chosen object, the scholar's gratitude to Waife was unspeakable. And seeing the man daily at last in his own cottage—Sophy's health restored to her cheeks, smiles to her lip, and cheered at her light fancy-work beside her grandsire's elbow-chair, with fairy legends instilling perhaps golden truths—seeing Waife thus, the scholar mingled with gratitude a strange tenderness of respect. He knew nought of the vagrant's past—his reason might admit that in a position of life so at variance with the gifts natural and acquired of the singular basket-maker, there was something mysterious and suspicious. But he blushed to think that he had ever ascribed to a flawed or wandering intellect, the eccentricities of glorious Humor — abetted an attempt to separate an old age so innocent and genial from a childhood so fostered and so fostering. And sure I am that if the whole world had risen up to point the finger of scorn at the one-eyed cripple, George Morley, the well-born gentleman—the refined scholar—the spotless churchman—would have given him his arm to lean upon, and walked by his side unashamed.

CHAPTER IV.

To judge human character rightly, a man may sometimes have very small experience, provided he has a very large heart.

Numa Pompilius did not more conceal from notice the lessons he received from Egeria, than did George Morley those which he received from the basket-maker. Natural, indeed, must be his wish for secresy—pretty story it would be for Humberston, its future rector learning how to preach a sermon from an old basket-maker! But he had a nobler and more imperious motive for discretion—his honor was engaged to it. Waife exacted a promise that he would regard the intercourse between them as strictly private and confidential.

"It is for my sake I ask this," said Waife, frankly, "though I might say it was for yours;" the Oxonian promised, and was bound. Fortunately, Lady Montfort, quitting the great house the very day after George had first encountered the basket-maker, and writing word that she should not return to it for some weeks —George was at liberty to avail himself of her lord's general invitation to make use of Montfort Court as his lodgings when in the neighborhood, which the proprieties of the world would not have allowed him to do while Lady Montfort was there without either host or female guests.

Accordingly, he took up his abode in a corner of the vast palace, and was easily enabled, when he pleased, to traverse unobserved the solitudes of the park, gain the waterside, or stroll thence through the thick copse leading to Waife's cottage, which bordered the park pales, solitary, sequestered, beyond sight of the neighboring village. The great house all to himself, George was brought in contact with no one to whom, in unguarded moments, he could even have let out a hint of his new acquaintance, except the clergyman of the parish, a worthy man, who lived in strict retirement upon a scanty stipend. For the Marquess was the lay impropriator; the living was therefore but a very poor vicarage, below the acceptance of a Vipont or a Vipont's tutor—sure to go to a worthy man forced to live in strict retirement. George saw too little of this clergyman, either to let out secrets or pick up information. From him, however, George did incidentally learn that Waife had some months previously visited the village, and proposed to the bailiff to take the cottage and osier land, which he now rented —that he represented himself as having known an old basket-maker who had dwelt there many years ago, and as having learned the basket craft of that long deceased operative.

As he offered a higher rent than the bailiff could elsewhere obtain, and as the bailiff was desirious to get credit with Mr. Carr Vipont for improving the property, by reviving thereon an art which had fallen into desuetude, the bargain was struck, provided the candidate, being a stranger to the place, could furnish the bailiff with any satisfactory reference. Waife had gone away, saying he should shortly re-

turn with the requisite testimonial. In fact, poor man, as we know, he was then counting on a good word from Mr. Hartopp. He had not, however returned for some months. The cottage, having been meanwhile wanted for the temporary occupation of an under gamekeeper, while his own was under repair, fortunately remained unlet. Waife, on returning, accompained by his little girl, had referred the bailiff to a respectable house-agent and collector of street rents in Bloomsbury, who wrote word that a lady, then abroad, had authorized him, as the agent employed in the management of a house property from which much of her income was derived, not only to state that Waife was a very intelligent man, likely to do well whatever he undertook, but also to guarantee, if required, the punctual payment of the rent for any holding of which he became the occupier. On this the agreement was concluded —the basket-maker installed.

In the immediate neighborhood there was no custom for basket-work, but Waife's performances were so neat, and some so elegant and fanciful, that he had no difficulty in contracting with a large tradesman (not at Humberston, but a more distant and yet more thriving town about twenty miles off) for as much of such work as he could supply. Each week the carrier took his goods and brought back the payments; the profits amply sufficed for Waife's and Sophy's daily bread, with even more than the surplus set aside for the rent. For the rest, the basket-maker's cottage being at the farthest outskirts of the straggling village inhabited but by a laboring peasantry, his way of life was not much known, nor much inquired into. He seemed a harmless hard-working man—never seen at the beerhouse, always seen with his neatly-dressed little grandchild in his quiet corner at church on Sundays—a civil, well-behaved man too, who touched his hat to the bailiff, and took it off to the vicar.

An idea prevailed that the basket-maker had spent much of his life in foreign countries, favored partly by a sobriety of habits which is not altogether national, partly by something in his appearance, which, without being above his lowly calling, did not seem quite in keeping with it—outlandish in short,—but principally by the fact that he had received since his arrival two letters with a foreign postmark. The idea befriended the old man; allowing it to be inferred that he had probably outlived the friends he had formerly left behind him in England, and on his return, been sufficiently fatigued with his rambles to drop contented in any corner of his native soil, wherein he could find a quiet home, and earn by light toil a decent livelihood.

George, though naturally curious to know what had been the result of his communication to Mrs. Crane—whether it had led to Waife's discovery, or caused him annoyance—had hitherto, however, shrunk from touching upon a topic which subjected himself to an awkward confession of officious intermeddling, and to which any indirect allusion might appear an indelicate attempt to pry into painful family affairs. But one day he received a letter from his father which disturbed him greatly, and induced him to break ground and speak to his preceptor frankly.

In this letter, the elder Mr. Morley mentioned incidentally amongst other scraps of local news, that he had seen Mr. Hartopp, who was rather out of sorts, his good heart not having recovered the shock of having been abominably "taken in" by an impostor for whom he had conceived a great fancy, and to whose discovery George himself had providentially led (the father referring here to what George had told him of his first meeting with Waife, and his visit to Mrs. Crane), the impostor, it seemed, from what Mr. Hartopp let fall—not being a little queer in the head, as George had been led to surmise—but a very bad character. "In fact," added the elder Morley, "a character so bad, that Mr. Hartopp was too glad to give up to her lawful protectors the child, whom the man appears to have abducted; and I suspect, from what Hartopp said, though he does not like to own that he was taken in to so gross a degree, that he had been actually introducing to his fellow-townsfolk, and conferring familiarly, with a regular jail-bird—perhaps a burgular. How lucky for that poor, soft-headed, excellent Jos. Hartopp—whom it is positively as inhuman to take in as it would be to defraud a born natural —that the lady you saw arrived in time to expose the snares laid for his benevolent credulity. But for that, Jos might have taken the fellow into his own house—(just like him!) —and been robbed by this time — perhaps murdered—Heaven knows!"

Incredulous and indignant, and longing to be empowered to vindicate his friend's fair name, George seized his hat, and strode quick along the path towards the basket-maker's cottage. As he gained the water-side, he perceived Waife himself, seated on a mossy bank, under a gnarled fantastic thorn-tree, watching a dear as it came to drink, and whistling a soft mellow tune—the tune of an old English border-song. The deer lifted its antlers from the water, and turned its large bright eyes towards the opposite bank, whence the note came—listening and wistful. As George's step crushed the wild thyme, which the thorn-tree shadowed—"Hush," said Waife, "and mark how the rudest musical sound can affect the brute creation." He resumed the whistle—a clearer, louder, wilder tune—that of a lively hunting-song. The deer turned quickly round—uneasy, restless, tossed its antlers, and bounded through the fern. Waife again changed the key of his primitive music—a melancholy *belling* note, like the belling itself of a melancholy hart, but more modulated into sweetness. The deer arrested its flight, and, lured by the mimic sound, returned towards the water-side, slowly and statily.

"I don't think the story of Orpheus charming the brutes was a fable—do you, sir?" said Waife, "The rabbits about here know me already; and if I had but a fiddle, I would undertake to make friends with that reserved and unsocial water-rat, on whom Sir Isaac in vain endeavors at present to force his acquaintance. Man commits a great mistake in not cultivating more intimate and amicable relations with the other branches of earth's great family. Few of them not mere amusing than we are;—naturally, for they have not our cares. And such variety of character too, where you would least expect it!"

GEORGE MORLEY.—"Very true; Cowper noticed marked differences of character in his favorite hares."

WAIFE.—"Hares! I am sure that there are not two house-flies on a window-pane, two minnows in that water, that would not present to us interesting points of contrast as to temper and disposition. If house-flies and minnows could but coin money, or set up a manufacture—contrive something, in short, to buy or sell attractive to Anglo-Saxon enterprise and intelligence—of course we should soon have diplomatic relations with them; and our despatches and newspapers would intruct us to a T in the characters and propensities of their leading personages. But, where man has no pecuniary nor ambitious interests at stake in his commerce with any class of his fellow-creatures, his information about them is extremely confused and superficial. The best naturalists are mere generalizers, and think they have done a vast deal when they classify a species. What should we know about mankind if we had only a naturalist's definition of man? We only know mankind by knocking classification on the head, and studying each man as a class in himself. Compare Buffon with Shakespeare! Alas, sir—can we never have a Shakespeare for houseflies and minnows?"

GEORGE MORLEY.—"With all respect for minnows and house flies, if we found another Shakespeare, he might be better employed, like his predecessor, in selecting individualities from the classifications of man."

WAIFE.—"Being yourself a man, you think so—a house-fly might be of a different opinion. But permit me, at least, to doubt whether such an investigator would be better employed in reference to his own happiness, though I grant that he would be so in reference to *your* intellectual amusement and social interests. Poor Shakespeare! How much he must have suffered!"

GEORGE MORLEY.—"You mean that he must have been racked by the passions he describes—bruised by collision with the hearts he dissects. That it is not necessary to genius. The judge on his bench, summing up evidence, and charging the jury, has no need to have shared the temptations, or been privy to the acts, of the prisoner at the bar. Yet how consummate may be his analysis!"

"No," cried Waife, roughly. No. Your illustration destroys your argument. The judge knows nothing of the prisoner! There are the circumstances—there is the law. By these he generalizes—by these he judges—right or wrong. But of the individual at the bar—of the world—the tremendous world within that individual heart—I repeat—he knows nothing. Did he know, law and circumstance might vanish—human justice would be paralyzed. Ho, there! place that swart-visaged, ill-looking foreigner in the dock, and let counsel open the case—hear the witnesses

depose! O, horrible wretch!—a murderer—unmanly murderer!—a defenceless woman smothered by caitiff hands! Hang him up—hang him up! 'Softly,' whispers the POET, and lifts the veil from the assassin's heart. 'Lo! it is Othello the Moor!' What jury now dare find that criminal guilty?—what judge now will put on the black cap?—who now says, 'Hang him up—hang him up?'"

With such lifelike force did the Comedian vent this passionate outburst, that he thrilled his listener with an awe akin to that which the convicted Moor gathers round himself at the close of the sublime drama. Even Sir Isaac was startled; and, leaving his hopeless pursuit of the water-rat, uttered a low bark, came to his master, and looked into his face with solemn curiosity.

WAIFE (relapsing into colloquial accents).—"Why do we sympathize with those above us more than with those below? why with the sorrows of a king rather than those of a beggar? why does Sir Isaac sympathize with me more than (let that water-rat vex him ever so much) I can possibly sympathize with him?—Whatever be the cause, see at least, Mr. Morley, one reason why a poor creature like myself finds it better employment to cultivate the intimacy of brutes than to prosecute the study of men. Among men, all are too high to sympathize with me; but I have known two friends who never injured nor betrayed me. Sir Isaac is one, Wamba was another. Wamba, sir, the native of a remote district of the globe (two friends civilized Europe is not large enough to afford to any one man)—Wamba, was less gifted by nature, less refined by education, than Sir Isaac; but he was a safe and trustworthy companion: Wamba, sir, was—an opossum."

GEORGE MORLEY.—"Alas, my dear Mr. Waife, I fear that men must have behaved very ill to you."

WAIFE.—"I have no right to complain. I have behaved very ill to myself. When a man is his own enemy, he is very unreasonable if he expect other men to be his benefactors."

GEORGE MORLEY (with emotion).—"Listen, I have a confession to make to you. I fear I have done you an injury—where, officiously, I meant to do a kindness." The scholar hurried on to narrate the particulars of his visit to Mrs. Crane. On concluding the recital, he added—"When again I met you here, and learned that your Sophy was with you, I felt inexpressibly relieved. It was clear then, I thought, that your grandchild had been left to your care unmolested, either that you had proved not to be the person of whom the parties were in search, or family affairs had been so explained and reconciled, that my interference had occasioned you no harm. But to-day I have a letter from my father which disquiets me much. It seems that the persons in question did visit Gatesboro', and have maligned you to Mr. Hartopp. Understand me, I ask for no confidence which you may be unwilling to give; but if you will arm me with the power to vindicate your character from aspersions which I need not your assurance to hold unjust and false, I will not rest till that task be triumphantly accomplished."

WAIFE (in a tone calm but dejected).—"I thank you with all my heart. But there is nothing to be done. I am glad that the subject did not start up between us until such little service as I could render you, Mr. Morley, was pretty well over. It would have been a pity if you had been compelled to drop all communication with a man of attainted character, before you had learned how to manage the powers that will enable you hereafter to exhort sinners worse than I have been. Hush, sir! you feel that, at least now, I am an inoffensive old man, laboring for a humble livelihood. You will not repeat here what you may have heard, or yet hear, to the discredit of my former life? You will not send me and my grandchild forth from our obscure refuge to confront a world with which we have no strength to cope? And, believing this, it only remains for me to say, Fare-you-well, sir."

"I should deserve to lose spe—spe—speech altogether," cried the Oxonian, gasping and stammering fearfully as he caught Waife firmly by the arm, "if I suffered—suff—suff—suff—"

"One, two! take time, sir!" said the Comedian softly. And with a sweet patience he reseated himself on the bank.

The Oxonian threw himself at length by the Outcast's side; and with the noble tenderness of a nature as chivalrously Christian as Heaven ever gave to Priest, he rested his folded hands upon Waife's shoulder, and looking him full

and close in the face, said thus, slowly, deliberately—not a stammer—

"You do not guess what you have done for me; you have secured to me a home and a career—the wife of whom I must otherwise have despaired—the Divine Vocation on which all my earthly hopes were set, and which I was on the eve of renouncing—do not think these are obligations which can be lightly shaken off. If there are circumstances which forbid me to disabuse others of impressions which wrong you, imagine not that their false notions will affect my own gratitude—my own respect for you!"

"Nay, sir! they ought—they must. Perhaps not your exaggerated gratitude for a service which you should not, however, measure by its effects on yourself, but by the slightness of the trouble it gave to me; not perhaps your gratitude—but your respect, yes."

"I tell you no! Do you fancy that I cannot judge of a man's nature without calling on him to trust me with all the secrets—all the errors, if you will, of his past life? Will not the calling to which I may now hold myself destined give me power and commandment to absolve all those who truly repent and unfeignedly believe? Oh, Mr. Waife! if in earlier days you have sinned, do you not repent? and how often, in many a lovely gentle sentence dropped unawares from your lips, have I had cause to know that you unfeignedly believe! Were I now clothed with sacred authority, could I not absolve you as a priest? Think you that, in the meanwhile, I dare judge you as a man? I—Life's new recruit, guarded hitherto from temptation by careful parents and favoring fortune—*I* presume to judge and judge harshly, the gray-haired veteran, wearied by the march, wounded in the battle!"

"You are a noble-hearted human being," said Waife, greatly affected. "And—mark my words—a mantle of charity so large you will live to wear as a robe of honor. But hear me, sir! Mr. Hartopp also is a man infinitely charitable, benevolent, kindly, and, through all his simplicity, acutely shrewd; Mr. Hartopp, on hearing what was said against me, deemed me unfit to retain my grandchild, resigned the trust I had confided to him, and would have given me alms, no doubt, had I asked them, but not his hand. Take your hands, sir, from my shoulder, lest the touch sully you."

George did take his hands from the vagrant's shoulder, but it was to grasp the hand that waived them off, and struggled to escape the pressure. "You are innocent, you are innocent! forgive me that I spoke to you of repentance as if you had been guilty. I feel you are innocent—feel it by my own heart. You turn away. I defy you to say thar you are guilty of what has been laid to your charge, of what has darkened your good name, of what Mr. Hartopp believed to your prejudice. Look me in the face and say, 'I am not innocent, I have not been belied.'"

Waife remained voiceless—motionless.

The young man, in whose nature lay yet unproved all those grand qualities of heart, without which never was there a grand orator, a grand preacher—qualities which grasp the results of argument, and arrive at the end of elaborate reasoning by sudden impulse—here released Waife's hand, rose to his feet, and, facing Waife, as the old man sate with face averted, eyes downcast, breast heaving, said loftily—

"Forget that I may soon be the Christian minister whose duty bows his ear to the lips of Shame and Guilt—whose hand, when it points to Heaven, no mortal touch can sully—whose sublimest post is by the sinners side. Look on me, but as man and gentleman. See, I now extend this hand to you. If, as man and gentleman, you have done that which, could all hearts be read, all secrets known, human judgment reversed by Divine omniscience, forbids you to take this hand—*then* reject it—go hence—we part! But, if no such act be on your conscience—however you submit to its imputation—THEN, in the name of Truth, as man and gentleman to man and gentleman, I command you to take this right hand, and in the name of that Honor, which bears no paltering, I forbid you to disobey."

The vagabond rose, like the Dead at the spell of a Magician—took, as if irresistibly, the hand held out to him. And the scholar, overjoyed, fell on his breast, embracing him as a son.

"You know," said George, in trembling accents, "that the hand you have taken will never betray—never desert; but is it—is it really powerless to raise and to restore you to your place?"

"Powerless amongst your kind for that in-

deed," answered Waife, in accents still more tremulous. "All the kings of the earth are not strong enough to raise a name that has once been trampled into the mire. Learn that it is not only impossible for me to clear myself, but that it is equally impossible for me to confide to mortal being a single plea in defence if I am innocent, in extenuation if I am guilty. And saying this, and entreating you to hold it more merciful to condemn than to question me—for question is torture—I cannot reject your pity; but it would be mockery to offer me respect!"

"What! not respect the fortitude which calumny cannot crush? Would that fortitude be possible if you were not calm in the knowledge that no false witnesses can mislead the Eternal Judge? Respect you! yes—because I have seen you happy in despite of men, and therefore I know that the cloud around you is not the frown of heaven."

"Oh," cried Waife, the tears rolling down his cheeks, "and not an hour ago I was jesting at human friendship—venting graceless spleen on my fellow-men! And now—now—Ah, sir! Providence is so kind to me! And,"—said he, brushing away his tears, as the old arch smile begun to play round the corner of his mouth,—"and kind to me in the very quarter in which unkindness had most sorely smitten me. True, you directed towards me the woman who took from me my grandchild—who destroyed me in the esteem of good Mr. Hartopp. Well, you see, I have my sweet Sophy back again; we are in the home of all others I most longed for; and that woman—yes, I can, at least, thus far, confide to you my secrets, so that you may not blame yourself for sending her to Gatesboro'—that very woman knows of my shelter—furnished me with the very reference necessary to obtain it; has freed my grandchild from a loathsome bondage, which I could not have legally resisted; and should new persecutions chase us, will watch and warn, and help us. And if you ask me how this change in her was effected—how, when we had abandoned all hope of green fields, and deemed that only in the crowd of a city we could escape those who pursued us when discovered there, though I fancied myself an adept in disguise, and the child and the dog were never seen out of the four garret walls in which I hid them;—if you ask me, I say, to explain how that very woman was suddenly converted from a remorseless foe into a saving guardian, I can only answer by no wit, no device, no persuasive art of mine. Providence softened her heart, and made it kind, just at a moment when no other agency on earth could have rescued us from—from—"

"Say no more—I guess! the paper this woman showed me was a legal form authorizing your poor little Sophy to be given up to the care of a father. I guess! of that father you would not speak ill to me; yet from that father you would save your grandchild. Say no more. And yon quiet home—your humble employment, really content you!"

"Oh, if such a life can but last! Sophy is so well, so cheerful, so happy. Did not you hear her singing the other day? She never used to sing! But we had not been here a week when song broke out from her, untaught as from a bird. But if any ill report of me travel hither from Gatesboro', or elsewhere, we should be sent away, and the bird would be mute in my thorn tree—Sophy would sing no more."

"Do not fear that slander shall drive you hence. Lady Montfort, you know, is my cousin, but you know not—few do—how thoroughly generous and gentle-hearted she is. I will speak of you to her—Oh, do not look alarmed. She will take my word when I tell her, 'that is a good man;' and if she ask more, it will be enough to say, 'those who have known better days are loth to speak to strangers of the past.'"

"I thank you earnestly, sincerely," said Waife, brightening up. "One favor more—if you saw in the formal document shown to you, or retain on your memory, the name of—of the person authorized to claim Sophy as his child, you will not mention it to Lady Montfort. I am not sure if ever she heard that name, but she may have done so—and—and—" He paused a moment, and seemed to muse; then went on, not concluding his sentence. "You are so good to me, Mr. Morley, that I wish to confide in you as far as I can. Now, you see I am already an old man, and my chief object is to raise up a friend for Sophy when I am gone,—a friend in her own sex, sir. Oh, you cannot guess how I long—how I yearn to view that child under the holy fostering eyes of woman. Perhaps if Lady Montfort

saw my pretty Sophy, she might take a fancy to her. Oh, if she did—if she did! And Sophy," added Waife, proudly, "*has* a right to respect. She is not like me—any hovel is good enough for me: But for her!—Do you know that I conceived that hope—that the hope helped to lead me back here—when, months ago, I was at Humberston, intent upon rescuing Sophy; and saw, though," observed Waife, with a sly twitch of the muscles round his mouth, "I had no right at that precise moment to be seeing anything—Lady Montfort's humane fear for a blind old imposter, who was trying to save his dog—a black dog, sir, who had died his hair,—from her carriage wheels.

And the hope became stronger still, when, the first Sunday I attended yon village church, I again saw that fair—wondrously fair—face at the far end—fair as moonlight and as melancholy. Strange it is, sir, that I, naturally a boisterous mirthful man, and now a shy, skulking fugitive—feel more attracted, more allured towards a countenance, in proportion as I read there the trace of sadness. I feel less abashed by my own nothingness—more emboldened to approach and say—'Not so far apart from me, thou too hast suffered'—Why is this?"

GEORGE MORLEY.—"'The fool hath said in his heart that there is no God;' but the fool hath not said in his heart that there is no sorrow"—pithy and most profound sentence; intimating the irrefragable chain that binds men to the Father. And where the chain tightens, the children are closer drawn together. But to your wish—I will remember it. And when my cousin returns, she shall see your Sophy."

CHAPTER V.

Mr. Waife, being by nature unlucky, considers that, in proportion as Fortune brings him good luck, Nature converts it into bad. He suffers Mr. George Morley to go away in his debt, and Sophy fears that he will be dull in consequence.

GEORGE MORLEY, a few weeks after the conversation last recorded, took his departure from Montfort Court, prepared, without a scruple, to present himself for ordination to the friendly bishop. From Waife he derived more than the cure of a disabling infirmity; he received those hints which, to a man who has the natural temperament of an orator, so rarely united with that of the scholar, expedite the mastery of the art that makes the fleeting human voice an abiding, imperishable power. The grateful teacher exhausted all his lore upon the pupil whose genius he had freed—whose heart had subdued himself. Before leaving, George was much perplexed how to offer to Waife any other remuneration than that which, in Waife's estimate, had already overpaid all the benefits he had received—viz. unquestioning friendship, and pledged protection. It need scarcely be said that George thought the man to whom he owed fortune and happiness was entitled to something beyond that moral recompense.

But he found, at the first delicate hint, that Waife would not hear of money, though the ex-Comedian did not affect any very Quixotic notions on that practical subject. "To tell you the truth, sir, I have rather a superstition against having more money in my hands than I know what to do with. It has always brought me bad luck. And what is very hard—the bad luck stays, but the money goes. There was that splendid sum I made at Gatesboro'. You should have seen me counting it over. I could not have had a prouder or more swelling heart if I had been that great man Mr. Elwes the miser. And what bad luck it brought me, and how it all frittered itself away! Nothing to show for it but a silk ladder and an old hurdy-gurdy, and I sold *them* at half price. Then when I had the accident which cost me this eye, the railway people behaved so generously, gave me £120—think of that! And before three days the money was all gone!"

How was that?" said George, half-amused, half-pained—"stolen perhaps?"

"Not so," answered Waife, somewhat gloomily, "but restored. A poor dear old man, who thought very ill of me—and I don't wonder at it—was reduced from great wealth to great poverty. While I was laid up, my landlady read a newspaper to me, and in that newspaper was an account of his reverse and destitution. But I was accountable to him for the balance of an old debt, and that, with the doctor's bills, quite covered my £120. I hope he does not think quite so ill of me now. But the money brought good luck to him, rather than to me. Well, sir, if you were now to give me money, I should be on the lookout

for some mournful calamity. Gold is not natural to me. Some day, however, by-and-by, when you are inducted into your living, and have become a renowned preacher, and have plenty to spare, with an idea that you would feel more comfortable in your mind if you had done something royal for the basket-maker, I will ask you to help me to make up a sum, which I am trying by degrees to save—an enormous sum—almost as much as I paid away from my railway compensation—I owe it to the lady who lent it to release Sophy from an engagement which I—certainly without any remorse of conscience—made the child break."

"Oh yes! What is the amount? Let me at least repay that debt."

"Not yet. The lady can wait—and she would be pleased to wait, because she deserves to wait—it would be unkind to her to pay her off at once. But, in the meanwhile, if you could send me a few good books for Sophy;—instructive; yet not very, very dry. And a French dictionary—I can teach her French when the winter days close in. You see I am not above being paid, sir. But, Mr. Morley, there is a great favor you can do me."

"What is it? Speak."

"Cautiously refrain from doing me a great dis-service! You are going back to your friends and relations. Never speak of me to them. Never describe me and my odd ways. Name not the lady, nor—nor—nor—the man who claimed Sophy. Your friends might not hurt me, others might. Talk travels. The Hare is not long in its form when it has a friend in a Hound that gives tongue. Promise what I ask. Promise it as 'man and gentleman.'"

"Certainly. Yet I have one relation to whom I should like, with your permission, to speak of you, with whom I could wish you acquainted. He is so thorough a man, of the world that he might suggest some method to clear your good name, which you yourself would approve. My uncle, Colonel Morley—"

"On no account!" cried Waife, almost fiercely, and he evinced so much anger and uneasiness, that it was long before George could pacify him by the most earnest assurances that his secret should be inviolably kept, and his injunctions faithfully obeyed. No men of the world consulted how to force him back to the world of men that he fled from! No colonels to scan him with martinet eyes, and hint how to pipeclay a tarnish! Waife's apprehensions gradually allayed, and his confidence restored, one fine morning George took leave of his eccentric benefactor.

Waife and Sophy stood gazing after him from their garden-gate. The cripple leaning lightly on the child's arm. She looked with anxious fondness into the old man's thoughtful face, and clung to him more closely as she looked.

"Will you not be dull, poor grandy?—will you not miss him?"

"A little at first," said Waife, rousing himself. "Education is a great thing. An educated mind, provided that it does us no mischief—which is not always the case—cannot be withdrawn from our existence without leaving a blank behind. Sophy, we must seriously set to work and educate ourselves!"

"We will, grandy dear," said Sophy, with decision; and a few minutes afterwards—"If I can become very, very clever, you will not pine so much after that gentleman—will you, grandy?"

CHAPTER VI.

Being a chapter that comes to an untimely end.

WINTER was far advanced when Montfort Court was again brightened by the presence of its lady. A polite letter from Mr. Carr Vipont had reached her before leaving Windsor, suggesting how much it would be for the advantage of the Vipont interest if she would consent to visit for a month or two the seat in Ireland, which had been too long neglected, and at which my lord would join her on his departure from his Highland moors. So to Ireland went Lady Montfort. My lord did not join her there; but Mr. Carr Vipont deemed it desirable for the Vipont interest that the wedded pair should reunite at Montfort Court, where all the Vipont family were invited to witness their felicity or mitigate their *ennui*.

But, before proceeding another stage in this history, it becomes a just tribute of respect to the great House of Vipont, to pause and place its past records and present grandeur in fuller display before the reverential reader. The

House of Vipont!—what am I about? The House of Vipont requires a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HOUSE OF VIPONT.—"*Majora Canamus.*"

THE House of Vipont! Looking back through ages, it seems as if the House of Vipont were one continuous living idiosyncrasy, having in its progressive development a connected unity of thought and action, so that through all the changes of its outward form it had been moved and guided by the same single spirit—"*Le roi est mort—vive le roi!*"—A Vipont dies—live the Vipont! Despite its high-sounding Norman name, the House of Vipont was no House at all for some generations after the Conquest. The first Vipont who emerged from the obscurity of time, was a rude soldier of Gascon origin, in the reign of Henry II.—one of the thousand fighting men who sailed from Milford Haven with the stout Earl of Pembroke, on that strange expedition which ended in the conquest of Ireland. This gallant man obtained large grants of land in that fertile island—some Mac or some O' vanished, and the House of Vipont rose.

During the reign of Richard I., the House of Vipont, though recalled to England (leaving its Irish acquisitions in charge of a fierce cadet, who served as middleman), excused itself from the Crusade, and, by marriage with a rich goldsmith's daughter, was enabled to lend monies to those who indulged in that exciting but costly pilgrimage. In the reign of John, the House of Vipont foreclosed its mortgages on lands thus pledged, and became possessed of a very fair property in England, as well as its fiefs in the sister isle.

The House of Vipont took no part in the troublesome politics of that day. Discreetly obscure, it attended to its own fortunes, and felt small interest in *Magna Charta*. During the reigns of the Plantagent Edwards, who were great encouragers, of mercantile adventure, the House of Vipont, shunning Creci, Bannockburn, and such profitless brawls, intermarried with London traders, and got many a good thing out of the Genoese. In the reign of Henry IV. the House of Vipont reaped the benefit of its past forbearance and modesty.

Now, for the first time, the Viponts appear as belted knights—they have armorial bearings—they are Lancasterian to the backbone—they are exceedingly indignant against heretics—they burn the Lollards—they have places in the household of Queen Joan, who was called a witch, but a witch is a very good friend when she wields a sceptre instead of a broomstick. And, in proof of its growing importance, the House of Vipont marries a daughter of the then mighty House of Darrell. In the reign of Henry V., during the invasion of France, the House of Vipont—being afraid of the dysentery which carried off more brave fellows than the field of Agincourt—contrived to be a minor. The Wars of the Roses puzzled the House of Vipont sadly. But it went through that perilous ordeal with singular tact and success. The manner in which it changed sides, each change safe, and most changes lucrative, is beyond all praise.

On the whole, it preferred the Yorkists; it was impossible to be actively Lancasterian, with Henry VI. of Lancaster always in prison. And thus, at the death of Edward IV., the House of Vipont was Baron Vipont of Vipont, with twenty manors. Richard III. counted on the House of Vipont, when he left London to meet Richmond at Bosworth—he counted without his host. The house of Vipont became again intensely Lancasterian, and was amongst the first to crowd round the litter in which Henry VII. entered the metropolis. In that reign it married a relation of Empson's—did the great House of Vipont! and as nobles of elder date had become scarce and poor, Henry VII. was pleased to make the House of Vipont an earl—the Earl of Montfort. In the reign of Henry VIII., instead of burning Lollards, the House of Vipont was all for the Reformation—it obtained the lands of two priories and one abbey. Gorged with that spoil, the House of Vipont, like an anaconda in the process of digestion, slept long. But no, it slept not.

Though it kept itself still as a mouse during the reign of Bloody Queen Mary (only letting it be known at court that the House of Vipont had strong papal leanings;) though during the reigns of Elizabeth and James it made no noise, the House of Vipont was silently inflating its lungs, and improving its constitution. Slept, indeed! it was wide awake. Then it

was that it began systematically its grand policy of alliances; then, was it sedulously grafting its olive branches on the stems of those fruitful New Houses that had sprung up with the Tudors; then, alive to the spirit of the day, provident of the wants of the morrow, over the length and breadth of the land it wove the interlacing network of useful cousinhood! Then, too, it began to build palaces, to enclose parks—it travelled, too, a little—did the House of Vipont! it visited Italy—it conceived a taste; a very elegant House became the House of Vipont! And in James's reign, for the first time, the House of Vipont got the Garter. The Civil Wars broke out—England was rent asunder. Peer and knight took part with one side or the other. The House of Vipont was again perplexed. Certainly at the commencement it was all for King Charles. But when King Charles took to fighting, the House of Vipont shook its sagacious head, and went about like Lord Falkland, sighing "Peace, peace!" Finally, it remembered its neglected estates in Ireland—its duties called it thither. To Ireland it went, discreetly sad, and, marrying a kinswoman of Lord Fauconberg—the connection least exposed to Fortune's caprice of all the alliances formed by the Lord Protector's family—it was safe when Cromwell visited Ireland; and no less safe when Charles II. was restored to England. During the reign of the merry monarch, the House of Vipont was a courtier married a beauty, got the Garter again, and, for the first time, became the fashion. Fashion began to be a Power. In the reign of James II., the House of Vipont again contrived to be a minor, who came of age just in time to take the oaths of fealty to William and Mary. In case of accidents, the House of Vipont kept on friendly terms with the exiled Stuarts, but it wrote no letters, and got into no scrapes. It was not, however, till the Government, under Sir Robert Walpole, established the constitutional and parliamentary system which characterizes modern freedom, that the puissance accumulated through successive centuries by the House of Vipont became pre-eminently visible. By that time its lands were vast, its wealth enormous; its parliamentry influence, as "a Great House," was a part of the British Constitution.

At this period, the House of Vipont found it convenient to rend itself into two grand divisions—the peer's branch and the commoner's. The House of Commons had become so important that it was necessary for the House of Vipont to be represented there by a great commoner. Thus arose the family of Carr Vipont. That division, owing to a marriage settlement favoring a younger son by the heiress of the Carrs, carried off a good slice from the estate of the earldom;—*uno averso, non deficit alter*,—the earldom mourned, but replaced the loss by two wealthy wedlocks of its own; and had long since seen cause to rejoice that its power in the Upper Chamber was strengtened by such aid in the Lower. For, thanks to its parliamentary influence, and the aid of the great commoner, in the reign of George III. the House of Vipont became a Marquess. From that time to the present day, the House of Vipont had gone on prospering and progressive. It was to the aristocracy what the *Times* newspaper is to the press. The same quick sympathy with public feeling—the same unity of tone and purpose—the same adaptability—and something of the same lofty tone of superiority to the petty interests of party. It may be conceded that the house of Vipont was less brilliant than the *Times* newspaper, but eloquence and wit, necessary to the duration of a newspaper, were not necessary to that of the House of Vipont. Had they been so, it would have had them!

The head of the House of Vipont rarely condescended to take office. With a rent-roll loosely estimated at about £170,000 a-year, it is beneath a man to take from the public a paltry five or six thousand a-year, and undergo all the undignified abuse of popular assemblies, and "a ribald press." But it was a matter of course that the House of Vipont should be represented in any cabinet that a constitutional monarch could be advised to form. Since the time of Walpole, a Vipont was always in the service of his country, except in those rare instances when the country was infamously misgoverned. The cadets of the House, or the senior member of the great commoner's branch of it, sacrificed their ease to fulfil that duty. The Montfort marquesses in general were contented with situations of honor in the household, as of Lord Steward, Lord Chamberlain, or Master of the Horse, etc.—not onerous dignities: and even these they only deigned to

accept on those especial occasions when danger threatened the Star of Brunswick, and the sense of its exalted station forbade the House of Vipont to leave its country in the dark.

Great Houses like that of Vipont assist the civilization by the law of their existence. They are sure to have a spirited and wealthy tenantry, to whom, if but for the sake of that popular character which doubles political influence, they are liberal and kindly landlords. Under their sway, fens and sands become fertile—agricultural experiments are tested on a large scale—cattle and sheep improve in breed—national capital augments, and, springing beneath the ploughshare, circulate indirectly to speed the ship and animate the loom. Had there been no Woburn, no Holkham, no Monfort Court, England would be the poorer by many a million. Our Great Houses tend also to the refinement of national taste; they have their show places, their picture-galleries, their beautiful grounds. The humblest drawing-rooms owe an elegance or comfort—the smallest garden a flower or esculent—to the importations which luxury borrowed from abroad, or the inventions it stimulated at home, for the original benefit of great Houses. Having a fair share of such merits, in common with other great Houses, the House of Vipont was not without good qualities peculiar to itself. Precisely because it was the most egotistical of Houses, filled with the sense of its own identity, and guided by the instincts of its own conservation, it was a very civil, good-natured House—courteous, generous, hospitable; a House (I mean the Head of it, not of course all its subordinate members, including even the august Lady Selina) that could bow graciously and shake hands with you. Even if you had no vote yourself, you might have a cousin who had a vote. And once admitted into the family, the House adopted you; you had only to marry one of its remotest relations, and the House sent you a wedding present; and at every general election, invited you to rally round your connection—the Marquess. Therefore, next only to the Established Church, the House of Vipont was that British institution the roots of which were the most widely spread.

Now the Viponts had for long generations been an energetic race. Whatever their defects, they had exhibited shrewdness and vigor. The late Marquess (grandfather to the present) had been perhaps the ablest—(that is, done most for the House of Vipont)—of them all. Of a grandiose and superb mode of living—of a majestic deportment—of princely manners—of a remarkable talent for the management of all business, whether private or public—a perfect enthusiast for the House of Vipont, and aided by a marchioness in all respects worthy of him, he might be said to be the culminating flower of the venerable stem. But the present lord, succeeding to the title as a mere child, was a melancholy contrast, not only to his grandsire, but to the general character of his progenitors. Before his time, every head of the House had done something for it—even the most frivolous had contributed; one had collected the pictures, another the statues, a third the medals; a fourth had amassed the famous Vipont library; while others had at least married heiresses, or augmented, through ducal lines, the splendor of the interminable cousinhood. The present Marquess was literally *nil*. The pith of the Viponts was not in him. He looked well, he dressed well; if life were only the dumb show of a tableau, he would have been a paragon of a Marquess.

But he was like the watches we give to little children, with a pretty gilt dial-plate, and no works in them. He was thoroughly inert—there was no winding him up; he could not manage his property—he could not answer his letters—very few of them could he read through. Politics did not interest him, nor literature, nor field-sports. He shot, it is true, but mechanically—wondering, perhaps, why he did shoot. He attended races, because the House of Vipont kept a racing-stud. He bet on his own horses, but if they lost showed no vexation. Admirers (no Marquess of Montfort could be wholly without them) said, "What fine temper! What good breeding!" It was nothing but constitutional apathy. No one could call him a bad man—he was not a profligate, an oppressor, a miser, a spendthrift; he would not have taken the trouble to be a bad man on any account. Those who beheld his character at a distance would have called him an exemplary man. The more conspicuous duties of his station, subscriptions, charities, the maintenance of grand establishments, the encouragement of the fine arts, were

virtues admirably performed for him by others. But the phlegm or nullity of his being was not, after all, so complete as I have made it, perhaps, appear.

He had one susceptibility which is more common with women than with men—the susceptibility to *pique*. His *amour propre* was unforgiving—pique that, and he could do a rash thing, a foolish thing, a spiteful thing—pique that, and, prodigious! the watch went! He had a rooted pique against his marchioness. Apparantly he had conceived it pique from the very first. He showed it passively by supreme neglect! he showed it actively by removing her from all the spheres of power which naturally fall to the wife when the husband shuns the details of business. Evidently he had a dread lest any one should say, "Lady Montfort influences my lord." Accordingly, not only the management of his estates fell to Carr Vipont, but even of his gardens, his household, his domestic arrangements. It was Carr Vipont or Lady Selina who said to Lady Montfort, "Give a ball"—"You should ask so and so to dinner"—"Montfort was much hurt to see the old lawn at the Twickenham Villa broken up by those new *bosquets*. True, it is settled on you as a jointure-house, but for that very reason Montfort is sensitive," etc., etc. In fact, they were virtually as separated, my lord and my lady, as if legally disunited, and as if Carr Vipont and Lady Selina were trustees or intermediaries in any polite approach to each other. But, on the other hand, it is fair to say that where Lady Montfort's sphere of action did not interfere with her husband's plans, habits, likings, dislikings, jealous apprehensions that she should be supposed to have any ascendancy over what exclusively belonged to himself as *Roi fainéant* of the Viponts, she was left free as air.

No attempt at masculine control or conjugal advice. At her disposal was wealth without stint—every luxury the soft could desire—every gewgaw the vain could covet. Had her pin-money, which in itself was the revenue of an ordinary peeress, failed to satisfy her wants—had she grown tired of wearing the family diamonds, and coveted now gems from Golconda—a single word to Carr Vipont or Lady Selina would have been answered by a *carte blanche* on the Bank of England. But Lady Montfort had the misfortune not to be extravagant in her tastes. Strange to say, in the world Lord Montfort's marriage was called a love match; he had married a portionless girl, daughter to one of his poorest and obscurest cousins, against the uniform policy of the House of Vipont, which did all it could for poor cousins except marrying them to its chief. But Lady Montfort's conduct in these trying circumstances was admirable and rare. Few affronts can humiliate us unless we resent them—and in vain.

Lady Montfort had that exquisite dignity which gives to submission the grace of cheerful acquiescence. That in the gay world flatterers should gather round a young wife so eminently beautiful, and so wholly left by her husband to her own guidance, was inevitable. But at the very first insinuated compliment or pathetic condolence, Lady Montfort, so meek in her household, was haughty enough to have daunted Lovelace. She was thus very early felt to be beyond temptation, and the boldest passed on, nor presumed to tempt. She was unpopular; called "proud and freezing;" she did not extend the influence of "The House;" she did not confirm its fashion—fashion which necessitates social ease, and which no rank, no wealth, no virtue can of themselves suffice to give. And this failure on her part was a great offence in the eyes of the House of Vipont. "She does absolutely nothing for us," said Lady Selina; but Lady Selina in her heart was well pleased that to her in reality thus fell, almost without a rival, the female representation, in the great world, of the Vipont honors. Lady Selina was fashion itself.

Lady Montfort's social peculiarity was in the eagerness with which she sought the society of persons who enjoyed a reputation for superior intellect, whether statesmen, lawyers, authors, philosophers, artists. Intellectual intercourse seemed as if it was her native atmosphere, from which she was habitually banished, to which she returned with an instinctive yearning and a new zest of life; yet was she called, even here, nor seemingly without justice—capricious and unsteady in her likings. These clever personages, after a little while, all seemed to disappoint her expectations of them; she sought the acquaintance of each with cordial earnestness; slid from the acquaintance with weary langour; never, after all, less alone than when alone.

And so wondrous lovely! Nothing so rare as beauty of the high type; genius and beauty, indeed, are both rare; genius, which is the beauty of the mind—beauty, which is the genius of the body. But, of the two, beauty, is the rarer. All of us can count on our fingers some forty or fifty persons of undoubted and illustrious genius, including those famous in action, letters, art. But can any of us remember to have seen more than four or five specimens of first-rate ideal beauty? Whosoever had seen Lady Montfort would have ranked her amongst such four or five in his recollection. There was in her face that lustrous dazzle to which the Latin poet, perhaps, refers when he speaks of the

> "Nitor
> Splendentis Pario marmore purius.
> Et voltus, nimium lubricus adspici,"

and which an English poet, with the less sensuous but more spiritual imagination of northern genius, has described in lines that an English reader may be pleased to see rescued from oblivion:—

> "Her face was like the milky way i' the sky,
> A meeting of gentle lights without a name." *

The eyes so purely bright, the exquisite harmony of coloring between the dark (not *too* dark) hair, and the ivory of the skin; such sweet radiance in the lip when it broke into a smile. And it was said that in her maiden day, before Caroline Lyndsay became Marchioness of Montfort, that smile was the most joyous thing imaginable. Absurd now; you would not think it, but that stately lady had been a wild, fanciful girl, with the merriest laugh and the quickest tear, filling the air round her with April sunshine. Certainly, no beings ever yet lived the life Nature intended them to live, nor had fair play for heart and mind, who contrived, by hook or by crook—to marry the wrong person!

CHAPTER VIII.

The interior of the Great House. The British Constitution at home in a Family Party.

GREAT was the family gathering that Christmas-tide at Montfort Court. Thither flocked the cousins of the House in all degrees and of various ranks. From dukes who had nothing left to wish for that kings and cousinhoods can give, to briefless barristers and aspiring cornets, of equally good blood with the dukes—the superb family united its motley scions. Such reunions were frequent, they belonged to the hereditary policy of the House of Vipont. On this occasion the muster of the clan was more significant than usual; there was a "CRISIS" in the constitutional history of the British empire. A new Government had been suddenly formed within the last six weeks, which certainly portended some direful blow on our ancient institutions, for the House of Vipont had not been consulted in its arrangements, and was wholly unrepresented in the Ministry, even by a lordship of the Treasury. Carr Vipont had therefore summoned the patriotic and resentful kindred.

It is an hour or so after the conclusion of dinner. The gentlemen have joined the ladies in the state suite, a suite which the last Marquess had rearranged and redecorated in his old age—during the long illness that finally conducted him to his ancestors. During his earlier years that princely Marquess had deserted Montfort Court for a seat nearer to London, and therefore much more easily filled with that brilliant society of which he had been long the ornament and centre; railways not then existing for the annihilation of time and space, and a journey to a northern county four days with post-horses, making the invitations even of a Marquess of Montfort unalluring to languid beauties and gouty ministers. But nearing the end of his worldly career, this long neglect of the dwelling identified with his hereditary titles, smote the conscience of the illustrious sinner. And other occupations beginning to pall, his lordship, accompanied and cheered by a chaplain, who had a fine taste in the decorative arts, came resolutely to Montfort Court; and there, surrounded with architects, and gilders, and upholsters, redeemed his errors; and, soothed by the reflection of the palace provided for his successor, added to his vaults—a coffin.

The suite expands before the eye. You are in the grand drawing-room, copied from that of Versailles. That is the picture, full length, of the late Marquess in his robes; its pendent is the late Marchioness, his wife. That table

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* SUCKLING.

of malachite is a present from the Russian Emperor Alexander; that vase of Sêvre which rests on it was made for Marie Antoinette—see her portrait enamelled in its centre. Through the open door at the far end your eye loses itself in a vista of other pompous chambers—the music-room, the statue hall, the orangery; other rooms there are appertaining to the suite—a ball-room fit for Babylon, a library that might have adorned Alexandria, but they are not lighted, nor required, on this occasion; it is strictly a family party, sixty guests and no more.

In the drawing-room three whist-tables carry off the more elderly and grave. The piano, in the music-room, attracts a younger group. Lady Selina Vipont's eldest daughter Honoria, a young lady not yet brought out, but about to be brought out the next season, is threading a wonderfully intricate German piece,—

"Link'd music, long drawn out,"

with variations. Her science is consummate. No pains have been spared on her education; elaborately accomplished, she is formed to be the sympathizing spouse of a wealthy statesman. Lady Montfort is seated by an elderly duchess, who is good-natured, and a great talker; near her are seated two middle-aged gentlemen, who had been conversing with her till the duchess, having cut in, turned dialogue into monologue.

The elder of these two gentlemen is Mr. Carr Vipont, bald, with clipped parliamentary whiskers; values himself on a likeness to Canning, but with a portlier presence—looks a large-acred man. Carr Vipont has about £40,000 a-year; has often refused office for himself, while taking care that other Viponts should have it; is a great authority in committee business and the rules of the House of Commons; speaks very seldom, and at no great length, never arguing, merely stating his opinion, carries great weight with him, and as he votes, vote fifteen other members of the House of Vipont, besides admiring satellites. He can therefore turn divisions, and has decided the fate of cabinets. A pleasant man, a little consequential, but the reverse of haughty—unctuously overbearing. The other gentleman, to whom he is listening, is our old acquaintance Colonel Alban Vipont Morley—Darrell's friend—George's uncle—a man of importance, not inferfor, indeed, to that of his kinsman Carr; an authority in club-rooms, an oracle in drawing-rooms, a first-rate man of the *beau monde*.

Alban Morley, a younger brother, had entered the Guards young; retired, young also, from the Guards with the rank of Colonel, and on receipt of a legacy from an old aunt, which, with the interest derived from the sum at which he sold his commission, allowed him a clear income of £1,000 a year. This modest income sufficed for all his wants, fine gentleman though he was. He had refused to go into Parliament—refused a high place in a public department. Single himself, he showed his respect for wedlock by the interest he took in the marriages of other people,—just as Earl Warwick, too wise to set up for a king, gratified his passion for royalty by becoming the king-maker. The Colonel was exceedingly accomplished, a very fair scholar, knew most modern languages. In painting an amateur, in music a connoisseur; witty at times, and with wit of a high quality, but thrifty in the expenditure of it; too wise to be known as a wit. Manly too, a daring rider, who had won many a fox's brush; a famous dear-stalker, and one of the few English gentlemen who still keep up the noble art of fencing—twice a-week to be seen, foil in hand, against all comers in Angelo's rooms. Thin, well-shaped,—not handsome, my dear young lady, far from it, but with an air so thoroughbred, that, had you seen him in the day when the opera-house had a crush-room and a fops' alley—seen him in either of those resorts, surrounded by elaborate dandies, and showy beauty-men—dandies and beauty-men would have seemed to you second-rate and vulgar; and the eye, fascinated by that plain quiet form—plain in manner, plain in dress, plain in feature—you would have said, "How very distinguished it is to be so plain!"

Knowing the great world from the core to the cuticle, and on that knowledge basing authority and position, Colonel Morley was not calculating,—not cunning,—not suspicious. His sagacity the more quick because its movements were straightforward. Intimate with the greatest, but sought, not seeking. Not a flatterer nor a parasite. But when his advice was asked (even if advice necessitated reproof), giving it with military candor. In

fine, a man of such social reputation as rendered him an ornament and prop to the House of Vipont; and with unsuspected depths of intelligence and feeling which lay in the lower strata of his knowledge of this world, to witness of some other one, and justified Darrell in commending a boy like Lionel Haughton to the Colonel's friendly care and admonitory counsels. The Colonel, like other men, had his weakness, if weakness it *can* be called: he believed that the House of Vipont was not merely the Corinthian capital, but the embattled keep—not merely the *dulce decus*, but the *præsidium columenque rerum* of the British monarchy. He did not boast of his connection with the House; he did not provoke your spleen by enlarging on its manifold virtues; he would often have his harmless jest against its members, or even against its pretensions, but such seeming evidences of forbearance or candor were cunning devices to mitigate envy. His devotion to the House was not obtrusive, it was profound. He loved the House of Vipont for the sake of England, he loved England for the sake of the House of Vipont. Had it been possible, by some tremendous reversal of the ordinary laws of nature, to dissociate the cause of England from the cause of the House of Vipont, the Colonel would have said, "Save at least the Ark of the Constitution! and rally round the old House!"

The Colonel had none of Guy Darrell's infirmity of family pride; he cared not a rush for mere pedigrees—much too liberal and enlightened for such obsolete prejudices. No! He knew the world too well not ro be quite aware that old family and long pedigrees are of no use to a man if he has not some money or some merit. But it was of use to a man to be a cousin of the House of Vipont, though without any money, without any merit at all. It was of use to be part and parcel of a British Institution; it was of use to have a legitimate indefeasible right to share in the administration and patronage of an empire, on which (to use a novel illustration) "the sun never sets." You might want nothing for yourself—the Colonel and the Marquess equally wanted nothing for themselves; but man is not to be a selfish egotist! Man has cousins—his cousins may want something. Demosthenes denounces, in words that inflame every manly breast, the ancient Greek who does not love his Polis or State, even though he take nothing from it but barren honor, and contribute towards it—a great many disagreeable taxes. As the Polis to the Greek, was the House of Vipont to Alban Vipont Morley. It was the most beautiful, touching affection imaginable! Whenever the House was in difficulties—whenever it was threatened by a Crisis—the Colonel was by its side, sparing no pains, neglecting no means, to get the Ark of the Constitution back into smooth water. That duty done he retired again into private life, and scorned all other reward than the still whisper of applauding conscience.

"Yes," said Alban Morley, whose voice, though low and subdued in tone, was extremely distinct, with a perfect enunciation, "Yes, it is quite true, my nephew has taken orders—his defect in speech, if not quite removed, has ceased to be any obstacle, even to eloquence; an occasional stammer may be effective—it increases interest, and when the right word comes, there is the charm of surprise in it. I do not doubt that George will be a very distinguished clergyman."

Mr. Carr Vipont.—"We want one—the House wants a very distinguished clergyman; we have none at this moment—not a bishop—not even a dean; all mere parish parsons, and among them not one we could push. Very odd, with more than forty livings too. But the Viponts seldom take to the Church kindly—George must be pushed. The more I think of it, the more we want a bishop: a bishop would be useful in the present Crisis." (Looking round the rooms proudly, and softening his voice)—"A numerous gathering, Morley! This demonstration will strike terror in Downing Street—eh! The old House stands firm—never was a family so united: all here, I think—that is, all worth naming—all, except Sir James, whom Montfort chooses to dislike, and George—and George comes to-morrow."

Colonel Morley.—"You forget the most eminent of all our connections—the one who could indeed strike terror into Downing Street, were his voice to be heard again!"

Carr Vipont.—"Whom do you mean? Ah, I know!—Guy Darrell. His wife was a Vipont—and he is not here. But he has long since ceased to communicate with any of us—the only connection that ever fell away from the House

of Vipont—especially in a CRISIS like the present. Singular man! For all the use he is to us, he might as well be dead! But he has a fine fortune—what will he do with it?"

THE DUCHESS.—"My dear Lady Montfort, you have hurt yourself with that paper-cutter."

LADY MONTFORT.—"No, indeed. Hush! we are disturbing Mr. Carr Vipont."

The Duchess, in awe of Carr Vipont, sinks her voice, and gabbles on—whisperously.

CARR VIPONT (resuming the subject).—"A very fine fortune—what will he do with it?"

COLONEL MORLEY.—"I don't know, but I had a letter from him some months ago."

CARR VIPONT.—"You had—and never told me!"

COLONEL MORLEY.—"Of no importance to you, my dear Carr. His letter merely introduced to me a charming young fellow—a kinsman of his own (no Vipont)—Lionel Haughton, son of Poor Charlie Haughton, whom you may remember."

CARR VIPONT.—"Yes, a handsome scamp—went to the dogs. So Darrell takes up Charlie's son—what! as his heir?"

COLONEL MORLEY.—"In his letter to me he anticipated that question in the negative."

CARR VIPONT.—"Has Darrell any nearer kinsman?"

COLONEL MORLEY.—"Not that I know of."

CARR VIPONT.—"Perhaps he will select one of his wife's family for his heir—a Vipont; I should not wonder."

COLONEL MORLEY (dryly).—"I should. But why may not Darrell marry again? I always thought he would—I think so still."

CARR VIPONT (glancing towards his own daughter Honoria).—"Well, a wife well chosen might restore him to society, and to us. Pity, indeed, that so great an intellect should be suspended—a voice so eloquent hushed. You are right; in this CRISIS, Guy Darrell once more in the House of Commons, we should have all we require—an orator, a debater! Very odd, but at this moment we have no speakers—WE, the Viponts!"

COLONEL MORLEY.—"Yourself!"

CARR VIPONT.—"You are too kind. I can speak on occasions; but regularly, no. Too much drudgery—not young enough to take to it now. So you think Darrell will marry again? A remarkably fine-looking fellow when I last saw him: not old yet; I dare say, well preserved. I wish I had thought of asking him here—Montfort!" (Lord Montfort, with one or two male friends, was passing by towards a billiard-room, opening through a side-door from the regular suite)—"Montfort! only think we forgot to invite Guy Darrell. Is it too late before our party breaks up?"

LORD MONTFORT (sullenly).—"I don't choose Guy Darrell to be invited to my house."

Carr Vipont was literally stunned by a reply so contumacious. Lord Montfort demur at what Carr Vipont suggested? He could not believe his senses.

"Not choose, my dear Montfort! you are joking. A monstrous clever fellow, Guy Darrell, and at this CRISIS—"

"I hate clever fellows—no such bores!" said Lord Montfort, breaking from the caressing clasp of Carr Vipont, and stalking away.

"Spare your regrets, my dear Carr," said Colonel Morley. "Darrell is not in England—I rather believe he is in Verona." Therewith the Colonel sauntered towards the group gathered round the piano. A little time afterwards Lady Montfort escaped from the Duchess, and, mingling courteously with her livelier guests, found herself close to Colonel Morley. "Will you give me my revenge at chess?" she asked, with her rare smile. The Colonel was charmed. As they sat down and ranged their men, Lady Montfort remarked carelessly—

"I overheard you say you had lately received a letter from Mr. Darrell. Does he write as if well—cheerful? You remember that I was much with his daughter, much in his house, when I was a child. He was ever most kind to me." Lady Montfort's voice here faltered.

"He writes with no reference to himself, his health or his spirits. But his young kinsman described him to me as in good health—wonderfully young-looking for his years. But cheerful—no! Darrel and I entered the world together; we were friends as much as a man so busy and so eminent as he could be friends with a man like myself, indolent by habit, and obscure out of Mayfair. I know his nature; we both know something of his family sorrows. He cannot be happy! Impossible!—alone—childless—secluded. Poor Darrell, abroad now; in Verona, too!—the dullest place! in mourning still for Romeo

and Juliet !—'Tis your turn to move. In his letter Darrell talked of going on to Greece, Asia—penetrating into the depths of Africa—the wildest schemes ! Dear County Guy, as we called him at Eton !—what a career his might have been ! Don't let us talk of him, it makes me mournful, Like Goethe, I avoid painful subjects upon principle."

LADY MONTFORT.—"No—we will not talk of him. No—I take the Queen's pawn. No, we will not talk of him !—no ! "

The game proceeded; the Colonel was within three moves of checkmating his adversary. Forgetting the resolution come to, he said, as she paused, and seemed despondently meditating a hopeless defence—

"Pray, my fair cousin, what makes Montfort dislike my old friend Darrell ? "

"Dislike ! Does he ! I don't know. Vanquished again, Colonel Morley ! " She rose; and, as he restored the chessmen to their box, she leant thoughtfully over the table.

"This young kinsman, will he not be a comfort to Mr. Darrell ? "

"He would be a comfort and a pride to a father; but to Darrell, so distant a kinsman—comfort !—why and how? Darrell will provide for him, that is all. A very gentlemanlike young man—gone to Paris by my advice—wants polish and knowledge of life. When he comes back he must enter society; I have put his name up at White's; may I introduce him to you ? "

Lady Montfort hesitated, and after a pause, said, almost rudely, "No."

She left the Colonel, slightly shrugging his shoulders, and passed into the billiard-room with a quick step. Some ladies were already there, looking at the players. Lord Montfort was chalking his cue. Lady Montfort walked straight up to him; her color was heightened; her lip was quivering; she placed her hand on his shoulder, with a wife-like boldness. It seemed as if she had come there to seek him from an impulse of affection. She asked with a hurried fluttering kindness of voice, "If he had been successful ? " and called him by his Christian name. Lord Montfort's countenance, before merely apathetic, now assumed an expression of extreme distaste. "Come to teach me to make a cannon, I suppose ! " he said mutteringly, and turning from her, contemplated the balls and missed the cannon.

"Rather in my way, Lady Montfort," said he then, and retiring to a corner, said no more.

Lady Montfort's countenance became still more flushed. She lingered a moment, returned to the drawing-room, and for the rest of the evening was unusually animated, gracious, fascinating. As she retired with her lady guests for the night, she looked round, saw Colonel Morley, and held out her hand to him. "Your nephew comes here to-morrow," said she, "my old playfellow; impossible quite to forget old friends—good night."

CHAPTER IX.

"Les extremes se touchent."

THE next day the gentleman were dispersed out of doors—a large shooting party. Those who did not shoot, walked forth to inspect the racing stud or the model farm. The ladies had taken their walk; some were in their own rooms, some in the reception-rooms, at work, or reading, or listening to the piano—Honoria Carr Vipont again performing. Lady Montfort was absent; Lady Selina kindly supplied the hostess's place. Lady Selina was embroidering, with great skill and taste, a pair of slippers for her eldest boy, who was just entered at Oxford, having left Eton with a reputation of being the neatest dresser, and not the worst cricketer, of that renowned educational institute. It is a mistake to suppose that fine ladies are not sometimes very fond mothers and affectionate wives. Lady Selina, beyond her family circle, was trivial, unsympathizing, cold-hearted, supercilious by temperament, never kind but through policy, artificial as clock-work. But in her own home, to her husband, her children, Lady Selina was a very good sort of woman. Devotedly attached to Carr Vipont, exaggerating his talents, thinking him the first man in England, careful of his honor, zealous for his interests, soothing in his cares, tender in his ailments. To her girls prudent and watchful—to her boys indulgent and caressing.

Minutely attentive to the education of the first, according to her high-bred ideas of education — and they really were "superior" girls, with much instruction and well-balanced

minds. Less authoritative with the last, because boys being not under her immediate control, her sense of responsibility allowed her to display more fondness and less dignity in her intercourse with them than with young ladies who must learn from her example, as well as her precepts, the patrician decorum which becomes the smooth result of impulse restrained and emotion checked. Boys might make a noise in the world, girls should make none. Laky Selina, then, was working the slippers for her absent son, her heart being full of him at that moment. She was describing his character, and expatiating on his promise to two or three attentive listeners, all interested, as being themselves of the Vipont blood, in the probable destiny of the heir to the Carr Viponts.

"In short," said Lady Selina, winding up, "as soon as Reginald is of age we shall get him into Parliament. Carr has always lamented that he himself was not broken into office early; Reginald must be. Nothing so requisite for public men as early training—makes them practical, and not too sensitive to what those horrid newspaper men say. That was Pitt's great advantage. Reginald has ambition; he should have occupation to keep him out of mischief. It is an anxious thing for a mother, when a son is good-looking—such danger of his being spoiled by the women. —Yes, my dear, it *is* a small foot, very small —his father's foot."

"If Lord Montfort should have no family," said a somewhat distant and subaltern Vipont, whisperingly and hesitating, "does not the title—"

"No my dear," interrupted Lady Selina; "no, the title does not come to us. It is a melancholy thought, but the marquessate, in that case, is extinct. No other heir-male from Gilbert, the first Marquess. Carr says there is even likely to be some dispute about the earldom. The Barony, of course, is safe; goes with the Irish estates, and most of the English; and goes (don't you know?)—to Sir James Vipont, the last person who ought to have it; the quietest, stupidest creature; not brought up to the sort of thing—a mere gentleman farmer on a small estate in Devonshire."

"He is not here?"

"No. Lord Montfort does not like him. Very natural. Nobody does like his heir, if not his own child, and some people don't even like their own eldest sons! shocking; but so it is. Montfort is the kindest, most tractable being that ever was, except where he takes a dislike. He dislikes two or three people very much."

"True; how he did dislike poor Mrs. Lyndsay!" said one of the listeners, smiling.

"Mrs. Lyndsay, yes—dear Lady Montfort's mother, I can't say I pitied her, though I was sorry for Lady Montfort. How Mrs. Lyndsay ever took in Montfort for Caroline I can't conceive! How she had the face to think of it! He, a mere youth at the time! Kept secret from all his family—even from his grandmother—the darkest transaction. I don't wonder that he never forgave it."

First Listener.—"Caroline has beauty enough to—"

Lady Selina (interrupting)—"Beauty of course—no one can deny *that*. But not at all suited to such a position, not brought up to the sort of thing. Poor Montfort! he should have married a different kind of woman altogether—a woman like his grandmother, the last Lady Montfort. Caroline does nothing for the House—nothing—has not even a child —most unfortunate affair."

Second Listener.—"Mrs. Lyndsay was very poor, was not she? Caroline, I suppose, had no opportunity of forming those taste and habits which are necessary for—for—"

Lady Selina (helping the listener).—"For such a position and such a fortune. You are quite right my dear. People brought up in one way, cannot accommodate themselves to another; and it is odd, but I have observed that people brought up poor can accommodate themselves less to being very rich than people brought up rich to accommodate themselves to being very poor. As Carr says, in his pointed way, 'it is easier to stoop than to climb.' Yes; Mrs. Lyndsay was, you know, a daughter of Seymour Vipont, who was for so many years in the Administration, with a fair income from his salary, and nothing out of it. She married one of the Scotch Lyndsays—good family, of course—with a very moderate property. She was left a widow young, with an only child, Caroline. Came to town with a small jointure. The late Lady Montfort was very kind to her. So were we all—took her up—pretty woman—pretty manners—worldly

—oh, very!—I don't like worldly people. Well, but all of a sudden, a dreadful thing happened. The heir-at-law disputed the jointure, denied that Lyndsay had any right to make settlements on the Scotch property—very complicated business. But, luckily for her, Vipont Crooke's daughter, her cousin and intimate friend, had married Darrell—the famous Darrell—who was then at the bar. It is very useful to have cousins married to clever people. He was interested in her case, took it up. I believe it did not come on in the courts in which Darrell practiced. But he arranged all the evidence, inspected the briefs, spent a great deal of his own money in getting up the case—and, in fact, he gained her cause though he could not be her counsel. People did say that she was so grateful that after his wife's death she had set her heart on becoming Mrs. Darrell the second. But Darrell was then quite wrapt up in politics—the last man to fall in love—and only looked bored when women fell in love with him, which a good many did. Grand-looking creature, my dear, and quite the rage for a year or two. However, Mrs. Lyndsay all of a sudden went off to Paris, and there Montfort saw Caroline, and was caught. Mrs. Lyndsay, no doubt, calculated on living with her daughter, having the run of Montfort House in town and Montfort Court in the country. But Montfort is deeper than people think for. No, he never forgave her. She was never asked here—took it to heart, went to Rome, and died."

At this moment the door opened, and George Morley, now the Rev. George Morley, entered, just arrived to join his cousins.

Some knew him, some did not, Lady Selina, who made it a point to know all the cousins, rose graciously, put aside the slippers, and gave him two fingers. She was astonished to find him not nearly so shy as he used to be—wonderfully improved; at his ease, cheerful, animated. The man now was in his right place, and following hope on the bent of inclination. Few men are shy when in their right places. He asked after Lady Montfort. She was in her own small sitting-room, writing letters—letters that Carr Vipont had entreated her to write—correspondence useful to the House of Vipont. Before long, however, a servant entered, to say that Lady Montfort would be very happy to see Mr. Morley. George followed the servant into that unpretending sitting room, with its simple chintzes and quiet book-shelves—room that would not have been too fine for a cottage.

CHAPTER X.

In every life, go it fast, go it slow, there are critical pausing-places. When the journey is renewed the face of the country is changed.

How well she suited that simple room—herself so simply dressed—her marvellous beauty so exquisitely subdued. She looked at home there, as if all of home that the house could give were there collected.

She had finished and sealed the momentous letters, and had come, with a sense of relief, from the table at the farther end of the room, on which those letters, ceremonious and conventional, had been written—come to the window, which, though mid-winter, was open, and the redbreast, with whom she had made friends, hopped boldly almost within reach, looking at her with bright eyes, and head curiously aslant. By the window a single chair, and a small reading-desk, with the book lying open. The short day was not far from its close, but there was ample light still in the skies, and a serene if chilly stillness in the air without.

Though expecting the relation she had just summoned to her presence, I fear she had half forgotten him. She was standing by the window deep in reverie as he entered, so deep that she started when his voice struck her ear and he stood before her. She recovered herself quickly, however, and said with even more than her ordinary kindliness of tone and manner towards the scholar—"I am so glad to see and congratulate you."

"And I so glad to receive your congratulations," answered the scholar, in smooth, slow voice, without a stutter.

"But, George, how is this?" asked Lady Montfort. "Bring that chair, sit down here, and tell me all about it. You wrote me word you were cured, at least sufficiently to remove your noble scruples. You did not say how. Your uncle tells me, by patient will, and resolute practice."

"Under good guidance. But I am going to

confide to you a secret, if you will promise to keep it."

"Oh, you may trust me; I have no female friends."

The clergyman smiled, and spoke at once of the lessons he had received from the basket-maker.

"I have his permission," he said in conclusion, "to confide the service he rendered me, the intimacy that has sprung up between us, but to you alone—not a word to your guests. When you have once seen him, you will understand why an eccentric man, who has known better days, would shrink from the impertinent curiosity of idle customers. Contented with his humble livelihood, he asks but liberty and repose."

"That I already comprehend," said Lady Montfort, half sighing, half smiling. "But my curiosity shall not molest him, and when I visit the village, I will pass by his cottage."

"Nay, my dear Lady Montfort, that would be to refuse the favor I am about to ask, which is that you would come with me to that very cottage. It would so please him."

"Please him—why?"

"Because this poor man has a young female grandchild, and he is so anxious that you should see and be kind to her, and because, too, he seems most anxious to remain in his present residence. The cottage, of course, belongs to Lord Montfort, and is let to him by the bailiff, and if you deign to feel interest in him, his tenure is safe."

Lady Montfort looked down and colored. She thought, perhaps, how false a security her protection, and how slight an influence her interest would be, but she did not say so. George went on; and so eloquently and so touchingly did he describe both grandsire and grandchild, so skilfully did he intimate the mystery which hung over them, that Lady Montfort became much moved by his narrative, and willingly promised to accompany him across the park to the basket-maker's cottage the first opportunity. But when one has sixty guests in one's house, one has to wait for an opportunity to escape from them unremarked. And the opportunity, in fact, did not come for many days—not till the party broke up—save one or two dowager she-cousins who "gave no trouble," and one or two bachelor he-cousins whom my lord retained to consummate the slaughter of pheasants, and play at billiards in the dreary intervals between sunset and dinner—dinner and bed-time.

Then one cheerful frosty noon George Morley and his fair cousin walked boldly *en evidence*, before the prying ghostly windows, across the broad gravel walks—gained the secluded shrubbery, the solitary deeps of park-land—skirted the wide sheet of water—and passing through a private wicket in the paling, suddenly came upon the patch of osier-ground and humble garden, which were backed by the basket-maker's cottage.

As they entered those lowly precincts a child's laugh was born to their ears—a child's silvery, musical, mirthful laugh; it was long since the great lady had heard a laugh like that—a happy child's natural laugh. She paused and listened with a strange pleasure. "Yes," whispered George Morley, "stop—and hush! there they are."

Waife was seated on the stump of a tree, materials for his handicraft lying beside, neglected. Sophy was standing before him—he, raising his finger as in reproof, and striving hard to frown. As the intruders listened, they overheard that he was striving to teach her the rudiments of French dialogue, and she was laughing merrily at her own blunders, and at the solemn affectation of the shocked schoolmaster. Lady Montfort noted with no unnatural surprise the purity of idiom and of accent with which this singular basket-maker was unconsciously displaying his perfect knowledge of a language which the best-educated English gentleman of that generation, nay, even of this, rarely speaks with accuracy and elegance. But her attention was diverted immediately from the teacher to the face of the sweet pupil. Women have a quick appreciation of beauty in their own sex—and women, who are themselves beautiful, not the least. Irresistibly Lady Montfort felt attracted towards that innocent countenance so lively in its mirth, and yet so softly gay. Sir Isaac, who had hitherto lain *pendu*, watching the movements of a thrush amidst a holly-bush, now started up with a bark. Waife rose—Sophy turned half in flight. The visitors approached.

Here slowly, lingeringly, let fall the curtain. In the frank license of narrative, years will have rolled away ere the curtain rise again.

Events that may influence a life often date from moments the most serene, from things that appear as trival and unnoticeable as the great lady's visit to the basket-maker's cottage. Which of those lives will that visit influence hereafter—the woman's, the child's, the vagrant's? Whose? Probably little that passes now would aid conjecture, or be a visible link in the chain of destiny. A few desultory questions—a few guarded answers—a look or so, a musical syllable or two exchanged between the lady and the child—a basket bought or a promise to call again. Nothing worth the telling. Be it then untold. View only the scene itself as the curtain drops reluctantly. The rustic cottage, its garden-door open, and open its old-fashioned lattice casements. You can see how neat and cleanly, how eloquent of healthful poverty, how remote from squalid penury, the whitewashed walls, the homely furniture within. Creepers lately trained around the doorway. Christmas holly, with berries red against the window pane; the bee-hive yonder; a starling, too, outside the threshold, in its wicker cage. In the background (all the rest of the neighboring hamlet out of sight), the church spire tapering away into the clear blue wintry sky.

All has an air of repose—of safety. Close beside you is the Presence of HOME—that ineffable, sheltering, loving Presence—which, amidst solitude, murmurs "not solitary;" a Presence unvouchsafed to the great lady in the palace she has left. And the lady herself? She is resting on the rude gnarled root-stump from which the vagrant had risen; she has drawn Sophy towards her; she has taken the child's hand; she is speaking now—now listening; and on her face kindness looks like happiness. Perhaps she *is* happy at that moment. And Waife? he is turning aside his weather-beaten, mobile countenance, with his hand anxiously trembling upon the young scholar's arm. The scholar whispers, "Are you satisfied with me?" and Waife answers in a voice as low, but more broken, "God reward you! Oh, joy!—if my pretty one has found at last a woman friend!" Poor vagabond, he has now a calm asylum—a fixed humble livelihood—more than that, he just achieved an object fondly cherished. His past life—alas! what has he done with it? His actual life—broken fragment though it be—is at rest now. But still the everlasting question—mocking, terrible question—with its phrasing of farce and its enigmas of tragical sense—"WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?"

Do with what? The all that remains to him—the all he holds!—the all which man himself, betwixt Free-will and Pre-decree, is permitted to do. Ask not the vagrant alone—ask each of the four there assembled on the flying bridge called the Moment. Time before thee—what wilt *thou* do with it? Ask thyself!—ask the wisest! Out of effort to answer that question, what dream-schools have risen, never wholly to perish! The science of seers on the Chaldee's Pur-Tor, or in the rock-caves of Delphi, gasped after and grasped at by horn-handed mechanics to-day in their lanes and alleys. To the heart of the populace sink down the blurred relics of what once was the law of the secretest sages—hieroglyphical tatters which the credulous vulgar attempt to interpret.—"WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?" Ask Merle and his Crystal! But the curtain descends! Yet a moment, there they are—age and childhood—poverty, wealth, station, vagabondage; the preacher's sacred learning, and august ambition; fancies of dawning reason;—hopes of intellect matured;—memories of existence wrecked; household sorrows—untold regrets—elegy and epic in low, close, human sighs, to which Poetry never yet gave voice;—all for the moment personified there before you—a glimpse for the guess—no more. Lower and lower falls the curtain! All is blank!

BOOK SIXTH.

CHAPTER I.

Etchings of Hyde Park in the month of June, which, if this History escape those villains the trunk-makers, may be of inestimable value to unborn antiquarians.—Characters, long absent, reappear and give some account of themselves.

FIVE years have passed away since this history opened. It is the month of June, once more—June, which clothes our London in all its glory; fills its languid ball-rooms with living flowers, and its stony causeways with human butterflies. It is about the hour of 6 P.M. The lounge in Hyde Park is crowded; along the road that skirts the Serpentine crawl the carriages one after the other; congregate by the rails the lazy lookers-on—lazy in attitude, but with active eyes, and tongues sharpened on the whetstone of scandal; the Scaligers of Club-windows airing their vocabulary in the Park. Slowly saunter on, foot-idlers of all degrees in the hierarchy of London *idlesse;* dandies of established fame—youthful tyros in their first season. Yonder in the Ride, forms less inanimate seem condemned to active exercise; young ladies doing penance in a canter; old beaux at hard labor in a trot. Sometimes, by a more thoughtful brow, a still brisker pace, you recognize a busy member of the Imperial Parliament, who, advised by physicians to be as much on horseback as possible, snatches an hour or so in the intervals between the close of his Committee and the interest of the Debate, and shirks the opening speech of a well-known bore. Among such truant lawgivers (grief it is to say it) may be seen that once model member, Sir Gregory Stollhead. Grim dyspepsia seizing on him at last, "relaxation from his duties" becomes the adequate punishment for all his sins. Solitary he rides, and, communing with himself, yawns at every second.

Upon chairs, beneficently located under the trees towards the north side of the walk, are interspersed small knots and coteries in repose. There, you might see the Ladies Prymme, still the Ladies Prymme—Janet and Wilhelmina; Janet has grown fat, Wilhelmina thin. But thin or fat, they are no less Prymmes. They do not lack male attendants; they are girls of high fashion, with whom young men think it a distinction to be seen talking; of high principle, too, and high pretensions (unhappily for themselves, they are co-heiresses), by whom young men under the rank of earls need not fear to be artfully entrapped into "honorable intentions." They coquet majestically, but they never flirt; they exact devotion, but they do not ask in each victim a sacrifice on the horns of the altar; they will never give their hands where they do not give their hearts; and being ever afraid that they are courted for their money, they will never give their hearts save to wooers who have much more money than themselves. Many young men stop to do passing homage to the Ladies Prymme; some linger to converse—safe young men, they are all younger sons. Farther on, Lady Frost and Mr. Crampe the wit, sit amicably side by side, pecking at each other with sarcastic beaks; occasionally desisting, in order to fasten nip and claw upon that common enemy, the passing friend! The Slowes, a numerous family, but taciturn, sit by themselves—bowed to much; accosted rarely.

Note that man of good presence, somewhere about thirty, or a year or two more, who, recognized by most of the loungers, seems not at home in the lounge. He has passed by the various coteries just described, made his obeisance to the Ladies Prymme, received an icy epigram from Lady Frost, and a laconic sneer from Mr. Crampe, and exchanged silent bows with seven silent Slowes. He has wandered

on, looking high in the air, but still looking for some one, not in the air; and evidently disappointed in his search, comes to a full stop at length, takes off his hat, wipes his brow, utters a petulant "Prr—r—pshw!" and seeing a little in the back-ground, the chairless shade of a thin emaciated, dusty tree, thither he retires, and seats himself with as little care whether there to seat himself be the right thing in the right place, as if in the honeysuckle arbor of a village inn. "It serves me right," said he to to himself: "a precocious villain bursts in upon me, breaks my day, makes an appointment to meet here, in these very walks, ten minutes before six; decoys me with the promise of a dinner at Putney—room looking on the river, and fried flounders. I have the credulity to yield; I derange my habits—I leave my cool studio; I put off my easy blouse; I imprison my freeborn throat in a cravat invented by the Thugs; the dog-days are at hand, and I walk rashly over scorching pavements in a black frock-coat and a brimless hat; I annihilate 3s. 6d. in a pair of kid-gloves; I arrive at this haunt of spleen; I run the gauntlet of Frosts, Slowes, and Prymmes;—and my traitor fails me! Half-past six—not a sign of him! and the dinner at Putney—fried flounders? Dreams! Patience, five minutes more; if then he comes not—breach for life between him and me! Ah, *viola!* there he comes, the laggard! But how those fine folks are catching at him! Has he asked them also to dinner at Putney, and do *they* care for fried flounders?"

The soliloquist's eye is on a young man, much younger than himself, who is threading the motley crowd with a light quick step, but is compelled to stop at each moment to interchange a word of welcome, a shake of the hand. Evidently he has already a large acquaintance; evidently he is popular, on good terms with the world and himself. What free in his bearing! what gay good-humor in his smile! Powers above! Lady Wilhelmina surely blushes as she returns his bow. He has passed Lady Frost unblighted; the Slowes evince emotion, at least the female Slowes, as he shoots by them with that sliding bow. He looks from side to side, with a rapid glance of an eye in which light seems all dance and sparkle; he sees the soliloquist under the meagre tree—the pace quickens, the lips part, half laughing.

"Don't scold, Vance. I am late, I know; but I did not make allowance for interceptions."

"Body o' me, interceptions! For an absentee just arrived in London, you seem to have no lack of friends."

"Friends made in Paris, and found again here at every corner, like pleasant surprises. But no friend so welcome, and dear, as Frank Vance."

"Sensible of the honor, O Lionello the magnificient. Verily you are *bon Prince!* The Houses of Valois and of Medici were always kind to artists. But whither would you lead me? Back into that tread-mill? Thank you, humbly; no. A crowd in fine clothes is of all mobs the dullest. I can look undismayed on the many-headed monster, wild and rampant; but when the many-headed monster buys its hats in Bond Street, and has an eye-glass at each of its inquisitive eyes, I confess I take fright. Besides, it is near seven o'clock; Putney not visible, and the flounders not fried!"

"My cab is waiting yonder; we must walk to it—we can keep on the turf, and avoid the throng. But tell me honestly, Vance, do you really dislike to mix in crowds—you, with your fame, dislike the eyes that turn back to look again, and the lips that respectfully murmur, 'Vance the Painter?' Ah, I always said you would be a great painter. And in five short years you have soared high."

"Pooh!" answered Vance, indifferently. "Nothing is pure and unadulterated in London use; not cream, nor cayenne pepper—least of all Fame;—mixed up with the most deleterious ingredients. Fame! did you read the *Times'* critique on my pictures in the present Exhibition? Fame indeed! Change the subject. Nothing so good as flounders. Ho! is that your cab? Superb! Car fit for the 'Grecian youth of talents rare,' in Mr. Enfield's *Speaker;*—horse that seems conjured out of the Elgin Marbles. Is he quiet?"

"Not very; but trust to my driving. You may well admire the horse—present from Darrell, chosen by Colonel Morley."

When the young men had settled themselves in the vehicle, Lionel dismissed his groom, and, touching his horse, the animal trotted out briskly.

"Frank," said Lionel, shaking his dark

curls with a petulant gravity, "Your cynical definitions are unworthy that masculine beard. You despise fame! what sheer affectation!

'Pulverem Olympicum
Collegisse juvat; metaque fervidis
Evitata rotis———.'"

"Take care," cried Vance; we shall be over." For Lionel, growing excited, teased the horse with his whip; and the horse bolting, took the cab within an inch of a water-cart.

"Fame, fame!" cried Lionel, unheeding the interruption. "What would I not give to have and to hold it for an hour?"

"Hold an eel, less slippery; a scorpion, less stinging! But— added Vance, observing his companion's heightened color.—"But," he added seriously, and with an honest compunction, "I forgot, you are a soldier, you follow the career of arms! Never heed what is said on the subject by a querulous painter! The desire of fame may be folly in civilians, in soldiers it is wisdom. Twin-born with the martial sense of honor, it cheers the march, it warms the bivouac; it gives music to the whirr of the bullet, the roar of the ball; it plants hope in the thick of peril; knits rivals with the bond of brothers; comforts the survivor when the brother falls; takes from war its grim aspect of carnage; and from homicide itself extracts lessons that strengthen the safeguards to humanity, and perpetuate life to nations. Right—pant for fame; you are a soldier!"

This was one of those bursts of high sentiment from Vance, which, as they were very rare with him, had the dramatic effect of surprise. Lionel listened to him with a thrilling delight. He could not answer, he was too moved. The artist resumed, as the cabriolet now cleared the Park, and rolled safely and rapidly along the road. "I suppose, during the five years you have spent abroad, completing your general education, you have made little study, or none, of what specially appertains to the profession you have so recently chosen."

"You are mistaken there, my dear Vance. If a man's heart be set on a thing, he is always studying it. The books I loved best, and most pondered over, were such as, if they did not administer lessons, suggested hints that might turn to lessons hereafter. In social intercourse, I never was so pleased as when I could fasten myself to some practical veteran—question and cross-examine him. One picks up more ideas in conversation than from books; at least I do. Besides, my idea of a soldier who is to succeed some day, is not that of a mere mechanician at-arms. See how accomplished most great captains have been. What observers of mankind!—What diplomatists—what reasoners! what men of action, because men to whom reflection had been habitual before they acted! How many stores of idea must have gone to the judgment which hazards the sortie, or decides on the retreat!"

"Gently, gently!" cried Vance. "We shall be into that omnibus! Give me the whip—do; there—a little more to the left—so. Yes; I am glad to see such enthusiasm in your profession—'tis half the battle. Hazlitt said a capital thing, 'The 'prentice who does not consider the Lord Mayor in his gilt coach the greatest man in the world, will live to be hanged!'"

"Pish!" said Lionel, catching at the whip.

VANCE (holding it back).—"No. I apologize. I retract the Lord Mayor; comparisons are odious. I agree with you, nothing like leather. I mean nothing like a really great soldier—Hannibal, and so forth. Cherish that conviction, my friend; meanwhile, respect human life—there is another omnibus!"

The danger past, the artist thought it prudent to divert the conversation into some channel less exciting.

"Mr. Darrel, of course, consents to your choice of a profession?"

"Consents—approves, encourages. Wrote me such a beautiful letter—what a comprehensive intelligence that man has!"

"Necessarily; since he agrees with you. Where is he now?"

"I have no notion; it is some months since I heard from him. He was then at Malta, on his return from Asia Minor."

"So! you have never seen him since he bade you farewell at his old Manor-House?"

"Never. He has not, I believe, been in England."

Nor in Paris, where you seem to have chiefly resided?"

"Nor in Paris. Ah, Vance, could I but be of some comfort to him. Now that I am older, I think I understand in him much that

perplexed me as a boy, when we parted. Darrell is one of those men who require a home. Between the great world and solitude, he needs the intermediate filling-up which the life domestic alone supplies: a wife to realize the sweet word helpmate—children, with whose future he could knit his own toils and his ancestral remembrances. That intermediate space annihilated, the great world and the solitude are left, each frowning on the other."

"My dear Lionel, you must have lived with very clever people; you are talking far above your years."

"Am I? True, I have lived, if not with very clever people, with people far above my years. That is a secret I learned from Colonel Morley, to whom I must present you—the subtlest intellect under the quietest manner. Once he said to me, 'Would you throughout life be up to the height of your century—always in the prime of man's reason—without crudeness and without decline—live habitually, while young, with persons older, and, when old, with persons younger, than yourself.'"

"Shrewdly said indeed. I felicitate you on the evident result of the maxim. And so Darrell has no home—no wife, and no children?"

"He has long been a widower; he lost his only son in boyhood, and his daughter—did you never hear?"

"No—what—?"—

"Married so ill—a runaway match—and died many years since, without issue."

"Poor man! It was these afflictions, then, that soured his life, and made him the hermit or the wanderer?"

"There," said Lionel, "I am puzzled; for I find that even after his son's death, and his daughter's unhappy marriage and estrangement from him, he was still in Parliament, and in full activity of career. But certainly he did not long keep it up. It might have been an effort to which, strong as he is, he felt himself unequal; or, might he have known some fresh disappointment, some new sorrow, which the world never guesses? what I have said as to his family afflictions, the world knows. But I think he will marry again. That idea seemed strong in his own mind when we parted; he brought it out bluntly, roughly. Colonel Morley is convinced that he will marry, if but for the sake of an heir."

VANCE.—"And if so, my poor Lionel, you are ousted of—"

LIONEL (quickly interrupting).—"Hush! Do not say, my dear Vance, do not *you* say—you!—one of those low mean things which, if said to me even by men for whom I have no esteem, make my ears tingle and my cheek blush. When I think what Darrell has already done for me—me who have no claim on him—it seems to me as if I must hate the man who insinuates, 'Fear lest your benefactor find a smile at his own hearth, a child of his own blood—for you may be richer at his death in proportion as his life is desolate."

VANCE.—"You are a fine young fellow and I beg your pardon. Take care of that milestone—thank you. But I suspect that at least two-thirds of those friendly hands that detained you on the way to me, were stretched out less to Lionel Haughton—a subaltern in the Guards—than to Mr. Darrell's heir presumptive."

LIONEL.—"That thought sometimes galls me, but it does me good; for it goads on my desire to make myself some one whom the most worldly would not disdain to know for his own sake. Oh for active service!—Oh for a sharp campaign! Oh for fair trial how far a man in earnest can grappel Fortune to his breast with his own strong hands! You have done so, Vance; you had but your genius and your painter's brush. I have no genius, but I have resolve, and resolve is perhaps as sure of its ends as genius. Genius and Resolve have three grand elements in common—Patience, Hope, Concentration."

Vance, more and more surprised, looking hard at Lionel, without speaking. Five years of that critical age, from seventeen to twenty-two, spent in the great capital of Europe—kept from its more dangerous vices partly by a proud sense of personal dignity, partly by a temperament which, regarding love as an ideal for all tender and sublime emotion, recoiled from low profligacy as being to Love what the Yahoo of the mocking satirist was to Man—absorbed much by the brooding ambition that takes youth out of the frivolous present into the serious future, and seeking companionship, not with contemporary idlers, but with the highest and maturest intellects that the free commonwealth of good society brought within his reach—Five years so spent had developed

a boy, nursing noble dreams, into a man fit for noble action—retaining freshest youth in its enthusiasm, its elevation of sentiment, its daring, its energy, and divine credulity in its own unexhausted resources; but borrowing from maturity compactness and solidity of idea—the link between speculation and practice—the power to impress on others a sense of the superiority which has been self-elaborated by unconscious culture.

"So!" said Vance, after a prolonged pause, "I don't know whether I have resolve or genius; but certainly if I have made my way to some small reputation, patience, hope, and concentration of purpose must have the credit of it; and prudence, too, which you have forgotten to name, and certainly don't evince as a charioteer. I hope, my dear fellow, you are not extravagant? No debts, eh?—why do you laugh?"

"The question is so like you. Frank—thrifty as ever.

"Do you think I could have painted with a calm mind, if I knew that at my door there was a dun whom I could not pay? Art needs serenity; and if an artist begin his career with as few shirts to his back as I had, he must place economy amongst the rules of perspective."

Lionel laughed again, and made some comments on economy which were certainly, if smart, rather flippant, and tended not only to lower the favorable estimate of his intellectual improvement which Vance had just formed, but seriously disquieted the kindly artist. Vance knew the world—knew the peculiar temptations to which a young man in Lionel's position would be exposed—knew that contempt for economy belongs to that school of Peripatetics which reserves its last lessons for finished disciples in the sacred walks of the Queen's Bench.

However, that was no auspicious moment for didactic warnings.

"Here we are!" cried Lionel—"Putney Bridge."

They reached the little inn by the river-side, and while dinner was getting ready, they hired a boat. Vance took the oars.

VANCE.—"Not so pretty here as by those green quiet banks along which we glided, at moonlight, five years ago."

LIONEL.—"Ah, no. And that innocent, charming child, whose portrait you took—you have never heard of her since?"

VANCE.—"Never! How should I! Have you?"

LIONEL.—"Only what Darrell repeated to me. His lawyer had ascertained that she and her grandfather had gone to America. Darrell gently implied, that from what he learned of them, they scarcely merited the interest I felt in their fate. But we were not deceived—were we, Vance?"

VANCE.—"No; the little girl—what was her name? Sukey? Sally?—Sophy—true, Sophy—had something about her extremely prepossessing, besides her pretty face; and, in spite of that horrid cotton print, I shall never forget it."

LIONEL.—"Her face! Nor I. I see it still before me!"

VANCE.—"Her cotton print! I see it still before me! But I must not be ungrateful. Would you believe it, that little portrait, which cost me three pounds, has made, I don't say my fortune, but my fashion?"

LIONEL.—"How! You had the heart to sell it?"

VANCE.—"No; I kept it as a study for young female heads—'with variations,' as they say in music. It was by my female heads that I became the fashion; every order I have contains the condition—'But be sure, one of your sweet female heads Mr. Vance.' My female heads are as necessary to my canvass as a white horse to Wouvermans'. Well, that child, who cost me three pounds, is the original of them all. Commencing as a Titania, she has been in turns a 'Psyche,' a 'Beatrice Cenci,' a 'Minna,' a 'Portrait of a Nobleman's Daughter,' 'Burn's Mary in Heaven,' 'The Young Gleaner,' and 'Sabrina Fair,' in Milton's *Comus*. I have led that child through all history, sacred and profane. I have painted her in all costumes (her own cotton print excepted). My female heads are my glory—even the *Times'* critic allows *that!* 'Mr. Vance, *there*, is inimitable! a type of childlike grace peculiarly his own,' etc., etc. I'll lend you the article."

LIONEL.—"And shall we never again see the original darling Sophy? You will laugh, Vance, but I have been heart proof against all young ladies. If ever I marry, my wife must have Sophy's eyes! In America!"

VANCE.—"Let us hope by this time happily married to a Yankee! Yankees marry girls in their teens, and don't ask for dowries. Married to a Yankee! not a doubt of it! a Yankee who chaws, whittles, and keeps a store!'"

LIONEL.—"Monster! Hold your tongue. Apropos of marriage, why are you still single?"

VANCE.—"Because I have no wish to be doubled up! Moreover, man is like a napkin, the more neatly the housewife doubles him, the more carefully she lays him on the shelf. Neither can a man once doubled know how often he may be doubled. Not only his wife folds him in two, but every child quarters him into a new double, till what was a wide and handsome substance, large enough for anything in reason, dwindles into a pitiful square that will not cover one platter—all puckers and creases—smaller and smaller with ever double—with every double a new crease. Then, my friend, comes the washing-bill! and, besides all the hurts one receives on the mangle, consider the hourly wear and tear of the linen-press! In short, Shakespeare vindicates the single life, and depicts the double in the famous line—which is no doubt intended to be allegorical of marriage—

'Double, double, toil and trouble.'

Besides, no single man can be fairly called poor. What double man can with certainty be called rich? A single man can lodge in a garret, and dine on a herring; nobody knows, nobody cares. Let him marry, and he invites the world to witness where he lodges, and how he dines. The first necessary a wife demands is the most ruinous, the most indefinite superfluity; it is Gentility according to what her neighbors call genteel. Gentility commences with the honeymoon; it is its shadow, and lengthens as the moon declines. When the honey is all gone, your bride says, 'We can have our tea without sugar when quite alone, love; but in case Gentility drop in, here's a bill for silver sugar-tongs!' That's why I'm single."

"Economy again, Vance."

"Prudence—dignity," answered Vance, seriously; and sinking into a reverie that seemed gloomy, he shot back to shore.

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Vance explains how he came to grind colors and save halfpence.—A sudden announcement.

THE meal was over—the table had been spread by a window that looked upon the river. The moon was up; the young men asked for no other lights; conversation between them—often shifting, often pausing—had gradually become grave, as it usually does, with two companions in youth: while yet long vistas in the Future stretch before them deep in shadow, and they fall into confiding talk on what they wish—what they fear; making visionary maps in that limitless Obscure.

"There is so much power in faith," said Lionel, even when faith is applied but to things human and earthly, that let a man be but firmly persuaded that he is born to do, some day, what at the moment seems impossible, and it is fifty to one but what he does it before he dies. Surely, when you were a child at school, you felt convinced that there was something in your fate distinct from that of the other boys—whom the master might call quite as clever—felt that faith in yourself which made you sure that you would be one day what you are."

"Well, I suppose so; but vague aspirations and self-conceits must be bound together by some practical necessity — perhaps a very homely and a very vulgar one—or they scatter and evaporate. One would think that rich people in high life ought to do more than poor folks in humble life. More pains are taken with their education; they have more leisure for following the bent of their genius; yet it is the poor folks, often half self-educated, and with pinched bellies, that do three-fourths of the world's grand labor. Poverty is the keenest stimulant, and poverty made me not say, 'I *will* do,' but I *must*.'"

"You knew real poverty in childhood, Frank?"

"Real poverty, covered over with sham affluence. My father was Genteel Poverty, and my mother was Poor Gentility. The sham affluence went when my father died. The real poverty then came out in all its ugliness. I was taken from a genteel school, at which, long afterwards, I genteelly paid the bills; and I had to support my mother somehow or other—somehow or other I succeeded.

Alas, I fear not genteelly! But before I lost her, which I did in a few years, she had some comforts which were not appearances; and she kindly allowed, dear soul, that gentility and shams do not go well together. O! beware of debt, *Lionello mio;* and never call that economy meanness which is but the safeguard from mean degradation."

"I understand you at last, Vance: shake hands—I know why you are saving."

"Habit now," answered Vance, repressing praise of himself, as usual. "But I remember so well when twopence was a sum to be respected, that to this day I would rather put it by than spend it. All our ideas—like orange-plants—spread out in proportion to the size of the box which imprisons the roots. Then I had a sister." Vance paused a moment, as if in pain, but went on with seeming carelessness, leaning over the window-sill, and turning his face from his friend. "I had a sister older than myself, handsome, gentle. I was so proud of her! Foolish girl! my love was not enough for her. Foolish girl! she could not wait to see what I might live to do for her. She married—oh! so genteelly!—a young man, very well born, who had wooed her before my father died. He had the villany to remain constant when she had not a farthing, and he was dependent on distant relations and his own domains in Parnassus. The wretch was a poet! So they married. They spent their honeymoon genteely, I daresay. His relations cut him. Parnassus paid no rents. He went abroad. Such heart-rending letters from her! They were destitute. How I worked! how I raged! But how could I maintain her and her husband too, mere child that I was? No matter. They are dead now, both;—all dead for whose sake I first ground colors and saved half-pence. And Frank Vance is a stingy, selfish bachelor. Never revive this dull subject again, or I shall borrow a crown from you, and cut you dead. Waiter, ho!—the bill. I'll just go round to the stables, and see the horse put to."

As the friends re-entered London, Vance said, "Set me down anywhere in Piccadilly; I will walk home. You, I suppose, of course, are staying with your mother in Gloucester Place?"

"No," said Lionel, rather embarrassed; "Colonel Morley, who acts for me as if he were my guardian, took a lodging for me in Chesterfield Street, Mayfair. My hours, I fear, would ill suit my dear mother. Only in town two days; and, thanks to Morley, my table is already covered with invitations."

"Yet you gave me one day, generous friend!"

"You the second day—my mother the first. But there are three balls before me to-night. Come home with me, and smoke your cigar while I dress."

"No; but I will at least light my cigar in your hall,—prodigal!"

Lionel now stopped at his lodging. The groom, who served him also as valet, was in waiting at the door. "A note for you, sir, from Colonel Morley—just come." Lionel hastily opened it, and read:—

"My dear Haughton,—Mr. Darrell has suddenly arrived in London. Keep yourself free all to-morrow, when, no doubt, he will see you. I am hurrying off to him.—Yours in haste, A. V. M."

CHAPTER III.

Once more Guy Darrell.

Guy Darrell was alone. A lofty room in a large house on the first floor. His own house in Carlton Gardens, which he has occupied during his brief and brilliant parliamentary career; since then, left contemptuously to the care of a house agent, to be let by year or by season, it had known various tenants of an opulence and station suitable to its space and site. Dinners and concerts, routs and balls, had assembled the friends and jaded the spirits of many a gracious host and smiling hostess. The tenure of one of the temporary occupants had recently expired, and ere the agent had found another, the long absent owner dropped down into its silenced halls as from the clouds, without other establishment than his old servant Mills and the woman in charge of the house. There, as in a caravanserai, the traveller took his rest, stately and desolate. Nothing so comfortless as one of those large London houses all to oneself. In long rows against the walls stood the empty *fauteuils*. Spectral from the glided ceiling hung lightless chandeliers. The furniture, pompous, but worn by use and faded by

time, seemed mementoes of departed revels. When you return to your own house in the country—no matter how long the absence—no matter how decayed by neglect the friendly chambers may be—if it has only been deserted in the meanwhile (not let to new races, who, by their own shifting dynasties, have supplanted the rightful lord, and half-effaced his memorials), the walls may still greet you forgivingly, the character of *Home* be still there. You take up again the thread of associations which had been suspended, not snapped.

But it is otherwise with a house in cities, especially in our fast-living London, where few houses descend from father to son—where the title-deeds are rarely more than those of a purchased lease for a term of years, after which your property quits you. A house in London, which your father never entered, in which no elbow-chair, no old-fashioned work-table, recall to you the kind smile of a mother—a house that you have left as you leave an inn, let to people whose names you scarce know, with as little respect for your family records as you have for theirs; when you return after a long interval of years to a house like that, you stand as stood Darrell—a forlorn stranger under your own roof-tree. What cared he for those who had last gathered round those hearths with their chill steely grates—whose forms had reclined on those formal couches—whose feet had worn away the gloss from those costly carpets? Histories in the lives of many might be recorded within those walls. Lovers there had breathed their first vows; bridal feasts had been held; babes had crowed in the arms of proud young mothers; politicians there had been raised into ministers; ministers there had fallen back into independent members; through those doors corpses had been borne forth to relentless vaults. For these races and their records what cared the owner? Their writing was not on the walls. Sponged out as from a slate, their reckonings with Time; leaving dim, here and there, some chance scratch of his own, blurred and bygone. Leaning against the mantle-piece, Darrell gazed round the room with a vague wistful look, as if seeking to conjure up associations that might link the present hour to that past life which had slipped away elsewhere; and his profile, reflected on the mirror behind, pale and mournful, seemed like that ghost of himself which his memory silently evoked.

The man is but little altered externally since we saw him last, however inly changed since he last stood on those unwelcoming floors; the form still retained the same vigor and symmetry—the same unspeakable dignity of mien and bearing—the same thoughtful bend of the proud neck—so distinct, in its elastic rebound, from the stoop of debility or age. Thick as ever the rich mass of dark-brown hair, though, when in the impatience of some painful thought his hand swept the loose curls from his forehead, the silver threads might now be seen shooting here and there—vanishing almost as soon as seen. No, whatever the baptismal register may say to the contrary, that man is not old—not even elderly; in the deep of that clear gray eye light may be calm, but in calm it is vivid; not a ray, sent from brain or from heart, is yet flickering down. On the whole, however, there is less composure than of old in his mien and bearing—less of that resignation which seemed to say, "I have done with the substances of life." Still there was gloom, but it was more broken and restless. Evidently that human breast was again admitting, or forcing itself to court, human hopes, human objects. Returning to the substances of life, their movement was seen in the shadows which, when they wrap us round at remoter distance, seem to lose their trouble as they gain their width. He broke from his musing attitude with an abrupt angry movement, as if shaking off thoughts which displeased him, and gathering his arms tightly to his breast, in a gesture peculiar to himself, walked to and fro the room, murmuring inaudibly. The door opened; he turned quickly, and with an evident sense of relief, for his face brightened. "Alban, my dear Alban."

"Darrell—old friend—old school-friend—dear, dear Guy Darrell!" The two Englishmen stood, hands tightly clasped in each other in true English greeting—their eyes moistening with remembrances that carried them back to boyhood.

Alban was the first to recover self-possession; and when the friends had seated themselves, he surveyed Darrell's countenance deliberately, and said: "So little change!—wonderful! What is your secret?"

"Suspense from life—hybernating. But

you beat me; you have been spending life, yet seem as rich in it as when we parted."

"No; I begin to decry the present and laud the past—to read with glasses, to decide from prejudice, to recoil from change, to find sense in twaddle—to know the value of health from the fear to lose it—to feel an interest in rheumatism, an awe of bronchitis—to tell anecdotes, and to wear flannel. To you in strict confidence I disclose the truth—I am no longer twenty-five. You laugh—this is civilized talk; does it not refresh you after the gibberish you must have chattered in Asia Minor?"

Darrell might have answered in the affirmative with truth. What man, after long years of solitude, is not refreshed by talk, however trivial, that recalls to him the gay time of the world he remembered in his young day—and recalls it to him on the lips of a friend in youth! But Darrell said nothing; only he settled himself in his chair with a more cheerful ease, and inclined his relaxing brows with a nod of encouragement or assent.

Colonel Morley continued. "But when did you arrive? whence? How long do you stay here? What are your plans?"

Darrell.—Cæsar could not be more laconic. When arrived?—this evening. Whence?—Ouzelford. How long do I stay?—uncertain. What are my plans?—let us discuss them."

Colonel Morley.—"With all my heart. You have plans, then?—a good sign. Animals in hybernations form none."

Darrell (putting aside the lights on the table, so as to leave his face in shade, and looking towards the floor as he speaks).—"For the last five years I have struggled hard to renew interest in mankind, reconnect myself with common life and its healthful objects. Between Fawley and London I desired to form a magnetic medium. I took rather a vast one—nearly all the rest of the known world. I have visited both Americas—either Ind. All Asia have I ransacked, and pierced as far into Africa as traveller ever went in search of Timbuctoo. But I have sojourned also, at long intervals—at least they seemed long to me—in the gay capitals of Europe (Paris excepted); mixed, too, with the gayest—hired palaces, filled them with guests—feasted and heard music. 'Guy Darrell,' said I, 'shake off the rust of years—thou hadst no youth while young. Be young now. A holiday may restore thee to wholesome work, as a holiday restores the wearied schoolboy.'"

Colonel Morley.—"I comprehend; the experiment succeeded."

Darrell.—"I don't know—not yet—but it may; I am here, and I intend to stay. I would not go to a hotel for a single day, lest my resolution should fail me. I have thrown myself into this castle of care without even a garrison. I hope to hold it. Help me to man it. In a word, and without metaphor, I am here with the design of re-entering London life."

Colonel Morley.—"I am so glad. Hearty congratulations! How rejoiced all the Viponts will be! Another 'crisis' is at hand. You have seen the newspapers regularly, of course—the state of the country interests you. You say that you come from Ouzelford, the town you once represented. I guess you will re-enter Parliament; you have but to say the word."

"Darrell.—"Parliament! No. I received, while abroad, so earnest a request from my old constituents to lay the foundation-stone of a new Town-Hall, in which they are much interested, and my obligations to them have been so great that I could not refuse. I wrote to fix the day as soon as I had resolved to return to England, making a condition that I should be spared the infliction of a public dinner, and landed just in time to keep my appointment—reached Ouzelford early this morning, went through the ceremony, made a short speech, came on at once to London, not venturing to diverge to Fawley (which is not very far from Ouzelford), lest, once there again, I should not have strength to leave it—and here I am." Darrell paused, then repeated, in brisk emphatic tone: "Parliament? No. Labor? No. Fellow-man, I am about to confess to you; I would snatch back some days of youth—a wintry likeness of youth—better than none. Old friend, let us amuse ourselves! When I was working hard—hard—hard—it was you who would say: 'Come forth, be amused'—you! happy butterfly that you were! Now, I say to you: 'Show me this flaunting town that you know so well; initiate me into the joy of polite pleasures, social commune—

'Dulce mihi furere est amico.'

You have amusements, let me share them.'"

"Faith," quoth the Colonel, crossing his legs, "you come late in the day! Amusements cease to amuse at last. I have tried all, and begin to be tired. I have had my holiday, exhausted its sports; and you, coming from books and desk fresh into the playground, say, 'Football and leapfrog.' Alas! my poor friend, why did not you come sooner?"

DARRELL.—"One word, one question. You have made EASE a philosophy and a system; no man ever did so with more felicitous grace; nor, in following pleasure, have you parted company with conscience and shame. A fine gentleman ever in honor as in elegance. Well, are you satisfied with your choice of life? Are you happy?"

"Happy—who is? Satisfied, perhaps!"

"Is there any one you envy—whose choice, other than your own, you would prefer?"

"Certainly."

"Who?"

"You."

"I!" said Darrell, opening his eyes with unaffected amaze. "I! envy me! prefer my choice!"

COLONEL MORLEY (peevishly).—"Without doubt. You have had gratified ambition—a great career. Envy you! who would not? Your own objects in life fulfilled; you coveted distinction—you won it; fortune—your wealth is immense; the restoration of your name and lineage from obscurity and humiliation—are not name and lineage again written in the *Libro d'oro?* What king would not hail you as his councillor? what senate not open its ranks to admit you as a chief? what house, though the haughtiest in the land, would not accept your alliance? And withal, you stand before me stalwart and unbowed, young blood still in your veins. Ungrateful man, who would not change lots with Guy Darrell? Fame, fortune, health, and, not to flatter you, a form and presence that would be remarked, though you stood in that black frock by the side of a monarch in his coronation robes."

DARRELL.—"You have turned my questions against myself with a kindliness of intention that makes me forgive your belief in my vanity. Pass on—or rather pass back; you say you have tried all in life that distracts or sweetens. Not so; lone bachelor; you have not tried wedlock. Has not that been your mistake?"

COLONEL MORLEY.—"Answer for yourself. You have tried it." The words were scarce out of his mouth ere he repented the retort. For Darrell started as if stung to the quick; and his brow, before serene, his lip, before playful, grew, the one darkly troubled, the other tightly compressed. "Pardon me," faltered out the friend.

DARRELL.—"O yes; I brought it on myself. What stuff we have been talking! Tell me the news—not political—any other. But first, your report of young Haughton. Cordial thanks for all your kindness to him. You write me word that he is much improved—most likeable; you add, that at Paris he became the rage—that in London you are sure he will be extremely popular. Be it so, if for his own sake. Are you quite sure that it is not for the expectation which I come here to disperse?"

COLONEL MORLEY.—"Much for himself, I am certain; a little, perhaps, because, whatever he thinks, and I say, to the contrary,—people seeing no other heir to your property—"

"I understand," interrupted Darrell quickly. "But he does not nurse those expectations? he will not be disappointed?"

COLONEL MORLEY.—"Verily I believe, that, apart from his love for you, and a delicacy of sentiment that would recoil from planting hopes of wealth in the graves of benefactors, Lionel Haughton would prefer carving his own fortunes to all the ingots hewed out of California by another's hand, and bequeathed by another's will."

DARRELL.—"I am heartily glad to hear and to trust you."

COLONEL MORLEY.—"I gather from what you say that you are here with the intention to—to—"

"Marry again," said Darrell firmly. "Right. I am."

"I always felt sure that you would marry again. Is the lady here too?"

"What lady?"

"The lady you have chosen."

"Tush—I have chosen none. I come here to choose; and in this I ask advice from your experience. I would marry again! I—at my age! Ridiculous! But so it is. You know all the mothers and marriageable daughters that London—*arida nutrix*—rears for nuptial altars—where, amongst them, shall I, Guy Darrel, the man whom you think so enviable,

find the safe helpmate, whose love he may reward with munificent jointure, to whose child he may bequeath the name that has now no successor, and the wealth he has no heart to spend?"

Colonel Morley—who, as we know, is by habit a match-maker, and likes the vocation—assumes a placid but cogitative mien, rubs his brow gently, and says in his softest, best-bred accents—"You would not marry a mere girl? some one of suitable age? I know several most superior young women on the other side of thirty, Wilhelmina Prymme, for instance, or Janet—"

Darrell.—"Old maids. No—decidedly no!"

Colonel Morley (suspiciously).—"But you would not risk the peace of your old age with a girl of eighteen, or else I do know a very accomplished, well-brought-up girl; just eighteen—who—"

Darrell.—"Re-enter life by the side of Eighteen! am I a madman?"

Colonel Morley.—"Neither old maids nor young maids; the choice becomes narrowed. You would prefer a widow. Ha; I have thought of one! a prize, indeed, could you but win her, the widow of—"

Darrell.—Ephesus!—Bah! suggest no widow to me. A widow, with her affections buried in the grave!"

Morley.—"Not necessarily. And in this case—"

Darrell (interrupting, and with warmth).—"In every case, I tell you, no widow shall doff her weeds for me. Did she love the first man? fickle is the woman who can love twice. Did she not love him? why did she marry him? perhaps she sold herself to a rent-roll? Shall she sell herself again to me, for a jointure? Heaven forbid! Talk not of widows. No dainty so flavorless as a heart warmed up again."

Colonel Morley.—Neither maids, be they old or young, nor widows. Possibly you want an angel. London is not the place for angels."

Darrell.—"I grant that the choice seems involved in perplexity. How can it be otherwise if oneself is perplexed? And yet, Alban, I am serious; and I do not presume to be so exacting as my words have implied. I ask not fortune, nor rank beyond gentle blood, nor youth, nor beauty, nor accomplishments, nor fashion, but I do ask one thing, and one thing only."

Colonel Morley.—"What is that? you have left nothing worth the having, to ask for."

Darrell.—"Nothing! I have left all! I ask some one whom I can love; love better than all the world—not the *mariage de convenance*, not the *mariage de raison*, but the *mariage d'amour*. All other marriage, with vows of love so solemn, with intimacy of commune so close, all other marriage, in my eyes, is an acted falsehood—a varnished sin. Ah, if I had thought so always! But away regret and repentance! The Future alone is now before me! Alban Morley! I would sign away all I have in the world (save the old house at Fawley), ay, and after signing, cut off, to boot, this right hand, could I but once fall in love; love, and be loved again, as any two of heaven's simplest human creatures may love each other while life is fresh! Strange, strange—look out into the world; mark the man of our years who shall be most courted, most adulated, or admired. Give him all the attributes of power, wealth, royalty, genius, fame. See all the younger generations bow before him with hope or awe; his word can make their fortune; at his smile a reputation dawns. Well; now let that man say to the young, 'Room amongst yourselves—all that wins me this homage I would lay at the feet of Beauty. I enter the lists of love,' and straightway his power vanishes, the poorest booby of twenty-four can jostle him aside; before, the object of reverence, he is now the butt of ridicule. The instant he asks right to win the heart of woman, a boy whom, in all else, he could rule as a lackey, cries, 'Off, Graybeard, *that* realm at least is mine!"

Colonel Morley.—"This were but eloquent extravagance, even if your beard were gray. Men older than you, and with half your pretensions, even of outward form, have carried away hearts from boys like Adonis. Only choose well; that's the difficulty—if it was not difficult, who would be a bachelor!"

Darrell.—"Guide my choice. Pilot me to the haven."

Colonel Morley.—"Accepted! But you must remount a suitable establishment; reopen your way to the great world, and penetrate those sacred recesses where awaiting spinsters weave the fatal web. Leave all to me. Let

Mills (I see you have him still) call on me to-morrow about your *ménage*. You will give dinners, of course?"

DARRELL.—"Oh, of course; must I dine at them myself?"

Morley laughed softly, and took up his hat.

"So soon!" cried Darrell. "If I fatigue you already, what chance shall I have with new friends?"

"So soon! it is past eleven. And it is you who must be fatigued."

"No such good luck; were I fatigued, I might hope to sleep. I will walk back with you. Leave me not alone in this room—alone in the jaws of a Fish; swallowed up by a creature whose blood is cold."

"You have something still to say to me," said Alban, when they were in the open air; "I detect it in your manner—what is it?"

"I know not. But you have told me no news; these streets are grown strange to me. Who live now in yonder houses? once the dwellers were my friends."

"In that house—oh, new people; I forget their names—but rich—in a year or two, with luck, they may be exclusives, and forget *my* name. In the other house, Carr Vipont, still."

"Vipont; those dear Viponts! what of them all? crawl they? sting they? Bask they in the sun? or are they in anxious process of a change of skin?"

"Hush, my dear friend; no satire on your own connections; nothing so injudicious. I am a Vipont, too, and all for the family maxim —'Vipont with Vipont, and come what may!'"

"I stand rebuked. But I am no Vipont. I married, it is true, into their house, and they married, ages ago, into mine; but no drop in the blood of time-servers flows through the veins of the last childless Darrell. Pardon. I allow the merit of the Vipont race; no family more excites my respectful interest. What of their births, deaths, and marriages?"

COLONEL MORLEY.—"As to births, Carr has just welcomed the birth of a grandson; the first-born of his eldest son (who married last year a daughter of the Duke of Halifax)—a promising young man, a Lord in the Admiralty. Carr has a second son in the —— Hussars; has just purchased his step: the other boys are still at school. He has three daughters too, fine girls, admirably brought up; indeed, now I think of it, the eldest, Honoria, might suit you, highly accomplished—well read, interests herself in politics—a great admirer of intellect, of a very serious turn of mind, too."

DARRELL.—"A female politician with a serious turn of mind—a farthing rushlight in a London fog! Hasten on to subjects less gloomy. Whose funeral Achievement is that yonder?"

COLONEL MORLEY.—"The late Lord Niton's, father to Lady Montfort."

DARRELL.—"Lady Montfort! Her father was a Lyndsay, and died before the Flood. A deluge, at least, has gone over me and my world since I looked on the face of his widow."

COLONEL MORLEY.—"I speak of the present Lord Montfort's wife—the Earl's. You of the poor Marquess's—the last Marquess—the marquesate is extinct. Surely, whatever your wanderings, you must have heard of the death of the last Marquess of Montfort?"

"Yes, I heard of that," answered Darrell, in a somewhat husky and muttered voice. "So he if dead, the young man!—What killed him?"

COLONEL MORLEY.—"A violent attack of croup—quite sudden. He was staying at Carr's at the time. I suspect that Carr made him talk! a thing he was not accustomed to do: Deranged his system altogether. But don't let us revive painful subjects."

DARRELL.—"Was she with him at the time?"

COLONEL MORLEY.—"Lady Montfort?—No; they were very seldom together."

DARRELL.—"She is not married again yet?"

COLONEL MORLEY.—"No, but still young, and so beautiful, she will have many offers. I know those who are waiting to propose. Montfort has been only dead eighteen months—died just before young Carr's marriage. His widow lives, in complete sclusion, at her jointure-house near Twickenham. She has only seen even me once since her loss."

DARRELL.—"When was that?"

MORLEY.—"About six or seven months ago; she asked after you with much interest."

DARRELL.—"After me!"

COLONEL MORLEY.—"To be sure. Don't I remember how constantly she and her mother were at your house? Is it strange that she should ask after you? You ought to know

her better — the most affectionate grateful character."

DARRELL.—"I dare say. But at the time you refer to, I was too occupied to acquire much accurate knowledge of a young lady's character. I should have known her mother's character better, yet I mistook even that."

COLONEL MORLEY.—"Mrs Lyndsay's character you might well mistake,—charming but artificial: Lady Montfort is natural. Indeed, if you had not that illiberal prejudice against widows, she was the very person I was about to suggest to you."

DARRELL.—"A fashionable beauty! and young enough to be my daughter. Such is human friendship! So the marquesate is extinct, and Sir James Vipont, whom I remember in the House of Commons—respectable man—great authority on cattle—timid, and always saying, '*Did* you read that article in to-day's paper?'—has the estates and the earldom."

COLONEL MORLEY.—"Yes. There was some fear of a disputed succession, but Sir James made his claim very clear. Between you and me, the change has been a serious affliction to the Viponts. The late Lord was not wise, but on State occasions he looked his part—*très Grand Seigneur*—and Carr managed the family influence with admirable tact. The present Lord has the habits of a yeomen; his wife shares his tastes. He has taken the management not only of the property, but of its influence, out of Carr's hands, and will make a sad mess of it, for he is an impracticable, obsolete politician. He will never keep the family together—impossible—a sad thing. I remember how our last muster, five years ago next Christmas, struck terror into Lord ——'s Cabinet; the mere report of it in the newspapers set all people talking and thinking. The result was, that, two weeks after, proper overtures were made to Carr—he consented to assist the ministers—and the country was saved! Now, thanks to this stupid new Earl, in eighteen months we have lost ground which it took at least a century and a half to gain. Our votes are divided, our influence fritted away; Montfort-house is shut up, and Carr, grown quite thin, says that in the coming 'CRISIS' a Cabinet will not only be formed, but will also last—last time enough for irreparable mischief,—without a single Vipont in office."

Thus Colonel Morley continued in mournful strain, Darrell silent by his side, till the Colonel reached his own door. There, while applying his latch-key to the lock, Alban's mind returned from the perils that threatened the House of Vipont and the Star of Brunswick, to the petty claims of private friendship. But even these last were now blended with those grander interests, due care for which every true patriot of the House of Vipont imbibed with his mother's milk.

"Your appearance in town, my dear Darrell, is most opportune. It will be an object with the whole family to make the most of you at this coming 'CRISIS'—I say coming, for I believe it must come. Your name is still freshly remembered—your position greater for having been out of all the scrapes of the party the last sixteen or seventeen years; your house should be the nucleus of new combinations. Don't forget to send Mills to me; I will engage your *chef* and your house-steward to-morrow. I know just the men to suit you. Your intention to marry, too, just at this moment, is most seasonable; it will increase the family interest. I may give out that you intend to marry?"

"Oh, certainly—cry it at Charing Cross."

"A club-room will do as well. I beg ten thousand pardons; but people will talk about money whenever they talk about marriage. I should not like to exagerate your fortune—I know it must be very large, and all at your own disposal—Eh?"

"Every shilling."

"You must have saved a great deal since you retired into private life?"

"Take that for granted. Dick Fairthorn receives my rents, and looks to my various investments; and I accept him as an indisputable authority when I say, that what with the rental of lands I purchased in my poor boy's lifetime, and the interest on my much more lucrative money capital, you may safely whisper to all ladies likely to feel interest in that diffusion of knowledge, 'Thirty-five thousand a-year, and an old fool.'"

"I certainly shall not say an old fool, for I am the same age as yourself; and if I had thirty-five thousand pounds a-year, I would marry too."

"You would! Old fool!" said Darrell, turning away.

CHAPTER IV.

Revealing glimpses of Guy Darrell's past in his envied prime. Dig but deep enough, and under all earth runs water, under all life runs grief.

ALONE in the streets, the vivacity which had characterized Darrell's countenance as well as his words, while with his old school friend, changed as suddenly and as completely into pensive abstracted gloom as if he had been acting a part, and with the exit the acting ceased. Disinclined to return yet to the solitude of his home, he walked at first mechanically, in the restless desire of movement, he cared not whither. But as, thus chance-led, he found himself in the centre of that long straight thoroughfare which connects what once were the separate villages of Tyburn and Holborn, something in the desultory links of reverie suggested an object to his devious feet. He had but to follow that street to his right hand, to gain in a quarter of an hour a sight of the humble dwelling-house in which he had first settled down, after his early marriage, to the arid labors of the bar. He would go, now that, wealthy and renowned, he was revisiting the long-deserted focus of English energies, and contemplate the obscure abode in which his powers had been first concentrated on the pursuit of renown and wealth. Who among my readers that may have risen on the glittering steep ("Ah, who can tell how hard it is to climb!" *) has not been similarly attracted towards the roof at the craggy foot of the ascent, under which golden dreams refreshed his straining sinews? Somewhat quickening his steps, now that a bourne was assigned to them, the man growing old in years, but, unhappily for himself, too tenacious of youth in its grand discontent, and keen susceptibilities to pain, strode noiselessly on, under the gaslights, under the stars; garlights primly marshalled at equidistance; stars that seem to the naked eye doted over space without symmetry or method—Man's order, near and finite, is so distinct; the Maker's order, remote, infinite, is so beyond Man's comprehension even of *what* is order!

Darrell paused hesitating. He had now gained a spot in which improvement had altered the landmarks. The superb broad thoroughfare continued where once it had vanished abrupt in a labyrinth of courts and alleys. But the way was not hard to find. He turned a little towards the left, recognizing, with admiring interest, in the gay white would-be Grecian edifice, with its French *grille*, bronzed, gilded, the transformed Museum in the still libraries of which he had sometimes snatched a brief and ghostly respite from books of law. Onwards yet through lifeless Bloomsbury, not so far towards the last bounds of Atlas as the desolation of Podden Place, but the solitude deepening as he passed. There it is, a quiet street indeed! not a soul on its gloomy pavements, not even a policeman's soul. Nought stirring save a stealthy, profligate, good-for-nothing cat, flitting fine through yon area bars. Down that street had he come, I trow, with a livelier, quicker step the day when, by the strange good-luck which had uniformly attended his worldly career of honors, he had been suddenly called upon to supply the place of an absent senior, and, in almost his earliest brief, the Courts of Westminster had recognized a master;—come, I trow, with a livelier step, knocked at that very door whereat he is halting now; entered the room where the young wife sat, and at sight of her querulous peevish face, and at sound of her unsympathizing languid voice, fled into his cupboard-like back parlor—and muttered "courage—courage" to endure the home he had entered longing for a voice which should invite and respond to a cry of joy.

How closed up, dumb, and blind, looked the small mean house, with its small mean door, its small mean rayless windows. Yet a FAME had been born there! Who are the residents now? Buried in slumber, have *they* any "golden dreams?" Works therein any struggling brain, to which the prosperous man might whisper "courage;" or beats, there, any troubled heart to which faithful women should murmur "joy?" Who knows? London is a wondrous poem, but each page of it is written in a different language; no lexicon yet composed for any.

Back through the street, under the gaslights, under the stars, went Guy Darrell, more slow and more thoughtful. Did the comparison

* "Ah, who can tell how hard it is to climb
The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar?"
BEATTIE.

between what he had been, what he was, the mean home just revisited, the stately home to which he would return, suggest thoughts of natural pride? It would not seem so; no pride in those close-shut lips, in that melancholy stoop.

He came into a quiet square—still Bloomsbury—and right before him was a large respectable mansion, almost as large as that one in courtlier quarters, to which he loiteringly delayed the lone return. There, too, had been for a time the dwelling which was called his *home*—there, when gold was rolling in like a tide, distinction won, position assured, there, not yet in Parliament, but foremost at the bar—already pressed by constituencies, already wooed by ministers—there, still young (O, luckiest of lawyers!)—there had he moved his household gods. Fit residence for a Prince of the Gown. Is it when living there that you would envy the prosperous man? Yes, the moment his step *quits* that door; but envy him when he enters its threshold?—nay, envy rather that roofless Savoyard who has crept under yonder portico, asleep with his ragged arm round the cage of his stupid dormice! There, in that great barren drawing-room sits a

"Pale and elegant Aspasia."

Well, but the wife's face is not queroulous now. Look again—anxious, fearful, secret, sly. Oh! that fine lady, a Vipont Crooke, is not contented to be wife to the wealthy, great Mr. Darrell. What wants she? that *he* should be spouse to the fashionable fine Mrs. Darrell? Pride in him! Not a jot of it; such pride were unchristian. Were he proud of her, as a Christian husband ought to be of so elegant a wife, would he still be in Bloomsbury? Envy *him!* the high gentleman, so true to his blood, all galled and blistered by the moral vulgarities of a tuft-hunting, toad-eating mimic of the Lady Selinas. Envy him! Well, why not? All women have their foibles. Wise husbands must bear and forbear. Is that all? wherefore, then, is her aspect so furtive, wherefore on his a wild, vigilant sternness? Tut, what so brings into coveted fashion a fair lady exiled to Bloomsbury as the marked adoration of a lord, not her own, who gives law to St. James's! Untempted by passion, cold as ice to affection, if thawed to the gush of a sentiment, secretly preferring the husband she chose, wooed, and won, to idlers less gifted even in outward attractions;—all this, yet seeking, coquetting for, the *éclat* of dishonor! To elope? Oh, no, too wary for that, but to be gazed at and talked of, as the fair Mrs. Darrell, to whom the Lovelace of London was so fondly devoted. Walk in, haughty son of the Dare-all. Darest thou ask who has just left thy house. Darest thou ask what and whence is the note that sly hand had secreted? Darest thou?—perhaps yes: what then? canst thou lock up thy wife? canst thou poniard the Lovelace? Lock up the air! poniard all whose light word in St. James's can bring into fashion the matron of Bloomsbury! Go, lawyer, go, study briefs, and be parchment.

Agonies—agonies—shot again through Guy Darrell's breast, as he looked on that large, most respectable house, and remembered his hourly campaign against disgrace! He has triumphed. Death fights for him: on the very brink of the last scandal, a cold, caught at some Vipont's ball, became fever; and so from that door the Black Horses bore away the Bloomsbury Dame, ere she was yet—the fashion! Happy in grief the widower who may, with confining hand, ransack the lost wife's harmless desk, sure that no thought concealed from him in life will rise accusing from the treasured papers. But that pale proud mourner, hurrying the eye over sweet-scented *billets*, compelled, in very justice to the dead, to convince himself that the mother of his children was corrupt only at heart—that the Black Horses had come to the door in time—and, wretchedly consoled by that niggardly conviction, flinging into the flames the last flimsy tatters on which his honor (rock-like in his own keeping) had been fluttering to and fro in the charge of a vain treacherous fool. Envy you *that* mourner? No! not even in his release. Memory is not nailed down in the velvet coffin; and to great loyal natures, less bitter is the memory of the lost when hallowed by tender sadness, than when coupled with scorn and shame.

The wife is dead. Dead, too, long years ago, the Lothario! The world has forgotten them; they fade out of this very record when ye turn the page; no influence, no bearing have they on such future events as may mark what yet rests of life to Guy Darrell. But as he there stands and gazes into space, the two

forms are before his eye as distinct as if living still. Slowly, slowly he gazes them down; the false smiles flicker away from their feeble lineaments; woe and terror on their aspects—they sink, they shrivel, they dissolve!

CHAPTER V.

The wreck cast back from Charybdis.
Souviens-toi de ta Gabrielle.

GUY DARRELL turned hurriedly from the large house in the great square, and, more and more absorbed in reverie, he wandered out of his direct way homeward, clear and broad though it was, and did not rouse himself till he felt, as it were, that the air had grown darker; and looking vaguely round, he saw that he had strayed into a dim maze of lanes and passages. He paused under one of the rare lamp-posts, gathering up his recollections of the London he had so long quitted, and doubtful for a moment or two which turn to to take. Just then, up from an alley fronting him at right angles, came sullenly, warily, a tall, sinewy, ill-boding tatterdemalion figure, and, seeing Darrell's face under the lamp, halted abrupt at the mouth of the narrow passage from which it had emerged—a dark form filling up the dark aperture. Does that ragged wayfarer recognize a foe by the imperfect ray of the lamplight? or is he a mere vulgar footpad, who is doubting whether he should spring upon a prey? Hostile his look—his gesture—the sudden cowering down of the strong frame, as if for a bound; but still he is irresolute. What awes him? What awes the tiger, who would obey his blood-instinct without fear, in his rush on the Negro—the Hindoo—but who halts and hesitates at sight of the white man—the lordly son of Europe?

Darrell's eye was turned towards the dark passage—towards the dark figure—carelessly, neither recognizing, nor fearing, nor defying—carelessly, as at any harmless object in crowded streets, and at broad day. But while that eye was on him, the tatterdemalion halted; and, indeed, whatever his hostility, or whatever his daring, the sight of Darrell took him by so sudden a surprise, that he could not at once re-collect his thoughts, and determine how to approach the quiet unconscious man who, in reach of his spring, fronted his overwhelming physical strength with the habitual air of dignified command. His first impulse was that of violence; his second impulse curbed the first. But Darrell now turns quickly, and walks straight on; the figure quits the mouth of the passage, and follows with a long and noiseless stride. It has nearly gained Darrell. With what intent? A fierce one, perhaps—for the man's face is sinister, and his state evidently desperate—when there emerges unexpectedly from an ugly-looking court or *cul-de-sac*, just between Darrell and his pursuer, a slim, long-backed, buttoned-up, weazel-faced policeman. The policeman eyes the tatterdemalion instinctively, then turns his glance towards the solitary defenceless gentleman in advance, and walks on, keeping himself between the two. The tatterdemalion stifles an impatient curse. Be his purpose force, be it only supplication, be it colloquy of any kind, impossible to fulfil it while that policeman is there. True, that in his powerful hands he could have clutched that slim, long-backed officer, and broken him in two as a willow-wand.

But that officer is the Personation of Law, and can stalk through a legion of tatterdemalions as a ferret may glide through a barn full of rats. The prowler feels he is suspected. Unknown as yet to the London police, he has no desire to invite their scrutiny. He crosses the way; he falls back; he follows from afar. The policeman may yet turn away before the safer streets of the metropolis be gained. No; the cursed Incarnation of Law, with eyes in its slim back, continues its slow stride at the heels of the unsupicious Darrell. The more solitary defiles are already passed—now that dim lane, with its dead wall on one side. By the dead wall skulks the prowler; on the other side still walks the Law. Now—alas for the prowler!—shine out the throughfares, no longer dim nor deserted—Liecester Square, the Haymarket, Pall Mall, Carlton Gardens; Darrell is at his door. The policeman turns sharply round. There, at the corner near the learned Club-house, halts the tatterdemalion. Towards the tatterdemalion the policeman now advances quickly. The tatterdemalion is quicker still—fled like a guilty thought.

Back—back—back into that maze of passages and courts—back to the mouth of that

black alley. There he halts again. Look at him. He has arrived in London but that very night, after an absence of more than four years. He has arrived from the sea-side on foot; see, his shoes are worn into holes. He has not yet found a shelter for the night. He has been directed towards that quarter, thronged with adventurers, native and foreign, for a shelter, safe, if squalid. It is somewhere near that court, at the mouth of which he stands. He looks round, the policeman is baffled, the coast clear. He steals forth, and pauses under the same gaslight as that under which Guy Darrell had paused before—under the same gaslight, under the same stars. From some recess in his rags he draws forth a large, distained, distended pocketbook — last relic of sprucer days—leather of dainty morocco, once elaborately tooled, patent springs, fairy lock, fit receptacle for bank-notes, *billet-doux* memoranda of debts of honor, or pleasurable engagements. Now how worn, tarnished, greasy, rapscallion-like, the costly bauble! Filled with what motley unlovable contents—stale pawn-tickets of foreign *monts de piété*, pledges never henceforth to be redeemed; scrawls by villanous hands in thievish hieroglyphics; ugly implements replacing the malachite penkife, the golden tooth-pick, the jewelled pencil-case, once so neatly set within their satin lappets.

Ugly implements, indeed—a file, a gimlet, loaded dice. Pell-mell, with such more hideous and recent contents, dishonored evidences of gaudier summer life—locks of ladies' hair, love-notes treasured mechanically, not from amorous sentiment, but perhaps from some vague idea that they might be of use if those who gave the locks or wrote the notes should be raised in fortune, and could buy back the memorials of shame. Diving amidst these miscellaneous documents and treasures, the prowler's hand rested on some old letters, in clerk-like fair caligraphy, tied round with a dirty string, and on them, in another and fresher writing, a scrap that contained an address—"Samuel Adolphus Poole Esq., Alhambra Villa, Regent's Park." "To-morrow, Nix my Dolly; to-morrow," muttered the tatterdemalion; "but to-night;—plague on it, where is the other blackguard's direction? Ah, here—" And he extracted from the thievish scrawls a *peculiarly* thievish looking hieroglyph. Now, as he lifts it up to read by the gaslight, survey him well. Do you not know him? Is it possible? What! the brilliant sharper! The ruffian exquisite! Jasper Losely! Can it be? Once before, in the fields of Fawley, we beheld him out at elbows, seedy, shabby, ragged. But then it was the decay of a foppish spendthrift—clothes distained, ill-assorted, yet, still of fine cloth; shoes in holes, yet still pearl-colored brodequins. But now it is the decay of no foppish spendthrift; the rags are not of fine cloth; the tattered shoes are not brodequins.

The man has fallen far below the politer grades of knavery, in which the sharper effects the beau. And the countenance, as we last saw it, if it had lost much of its earlier beauty, was still incontestably handsome. What with vigor, and health, and animal spirits, *then* on the aspect still lingered light; *now*, from corruption, the light itself was gone. In that herculean constitution excess of all kinds had at length forced its ravage, and the ravage was visible in the ruined face. The once sparkling eye was dull and bloodshot. The colors of the cheek, once clear and vivid, to which fiery drink had only sent the blood in a warmer glow, were now of a leaden dulness, relieved but by broken streaks of angry red—like gleams of flame struggling through gathered smoke. The profile, once sharp and delicate like Apollo's, was now confused in its swollen outline; a few years more, and it would be gross as that of Silenus—the nostrils, distended with incipient carbuncles, which betray the gnawing fang that alcohol fastens into the liver. Evil passions had destroyed the outline of the once beautiful lips, arched as a Cupid's bow. The sideling, lowering, villanous expression which had formerly been but occasional, was now habitual and heightened. It was the look of the bison before it gores. It is true, however, that even yet on the countenance there lingered the trace of that lavish favor bestowed on it by nature. An artist would still have said, "How handsome that ragamuffin must have been!"

And true is it also, that there was yet that about the bearing of the man, which contrasted his squalor, and seemed to say that he had not been born to wear rags, and loiter at midnight amongst the haunts of thieves. Nay, I am not sure that you would have been as incredulous now, if told that the wild outlaw

before you had some claim by birth or by nurture to the rank of gentleman, as you would, had you seen the gay spendthrift in his gaudy day. For then he seemed below, and now he seemed above, the grade in which he took place. And all this made his aspect yet more sinister, and the impression that he was dangerous yet more profound. Muscular strength often remains to a powerful frame long after the constitution is undermined, and Jasper Losely's frame was still that of a formidable athlete; nay, its strength was yet more apparent now that the shoulders and limbs had increased in bulk, than when it was half-disguised in the lissom symmetry of exquisite proportion — less active, less supple, less capable of endurance, but with more crushing weight in its rush or its blow. It was the figure in which brute force seems so to predominate that in a savage state it would have worn a crown—the figure which secures command and authority in all societies where force alone gives the law. Thus, under the gaslight aud under the stars, stood the terrible animal—a strong man embruted—"SOUVIENS-TOI DE TA GABRIELLE." — There, still uneffaced, though the gold threads are all tarnished and ragged, are the ominous words on the silk of the she-devil's love-token! But Jasper has now inspected the direction on the paper he held to the lamp-light, and, satisfying himself that he was in the right quarter, restored the paper to the bulky distended pocketbook, and walked sullenly on towards the court from which had emerged the policeman who had crossed his prowling chase.

"It is the most infernal shame," said Losely between his grinded teeth, "that I should be driven to these wretched dens for a lodging, while that man, who ought to feel bound to maintain me, should be rolling in wealth, and cottoned up in a palace. But he shall fork out. Sophy must be hunted up. I will clothe her in rags like these. She shall sit at his street-door. I will shame the miserly hunks. But how track the girl? Have I no other hold over him? Can I send Dolly Poole to him? How addled my brains are!—want of food—want of sleep. Is this the place? Peuh!—"

Thus murmuring, he now reached the arch of the court, and was swallowed up in its gloom. A few strides, and he came into a square open space only lighted by the skies. A house, larger than the rest, which were of the meanest order, stood somewhat back, occupying nearly one side of the quadrangle—old, dingy, dilapidated. At the door of this house stood another man, applying his latch-key to the lock. As Losely approached, the man turned quickly, half in fear, half in menace—a small, very thin, impish-looking man, with peculiarly restless features that seemed trying to run away from his face. Thin as he was, he looked all skin and no bones—a goblin of a man whom it would not astonish you to hear could creep through a keyhole. Seeming still more shadowy and impalpable by his slight, thin, sable dress, not of cloth, but a sort of stuff like alpaca. Nor was that dress ragged, nor, as seen but in starlight, did it look worn or shabby; still you had but to glance at the creature to feel that it was a child in the same Family of Night as the ragged felon that towered by its side. The two outlaws stared at each other. "Cutts!" said Losely, in the old rollicking voice, but in a hoarser, rougher key—"Cutts, my boy, here I am; welcome me!"

"What! General Jas.!" returned Cutts, in a tone which was not without a certain respectful awe, and then proceeded to pour out a series of questions in a mysterious language, which may be thus translated and abridged: "How long have you been in England? how has it fared with you? you seem very badly off? coming here to hide? nothing very bad, I hope? what is it?"

Jasper answered in the same language, though with less practised mastery of it—and with that constitutional levity which, whatever the time or circumstance, occasionally gave a strange sort of wit, or queer, uncanny, devil-me-care vein of drollery, to his modes of expression.

"Three months of the worst luck man ever had—a row with the *gens-d' armes*—long story—three of our pals seized—affair of the galleys for them, I suspect—French frogs can't seize me—fricasseed one or two of them—broke away—crossed the country—reached the coast—found an honest smuggler—landed off Sussex with a few other kegs of brandy—remembered you—preserved the address you gave me—and condescend to this rat-hole for a night or so. Let me in—knock up somebody

—break open the larder—I want to eat—I am famished—I should have eaten you by this time, only there's nothing on your bones."

The little man opened the door—a passage black as Erebus. "Give me your hand, General." Jasper was led through the pitchy gloom for a few yards; then the guide found a gas-cock, and the place broke suddenly into light. A dirty narrow staircase on one side; facing it, a sort of lobby, in which an open door showed a long sanded parlor, like that in public-houses — several tables, benches, the walls whitewashed, but adorned with sundry ingenious designs made by charcoal or the smoked ends of clay-pipes. A strong smell of stale tobacco and of gin and rum. Another gaslight, swinging from the centre of the ceiling, sprang into light as Cutts touched the tap-cock.

"Wait here," said the guide. "I will go and get you some supper."

"And some brandy," said Jasper.

"Of course."

The bravo threw himself at length on one of the tables, and, closing his eyes, moaned. His vast strength had become acquainted with physical pain. In its stout knots and fibres, aches and sharp twinges, the dragon-teeth of which had been sown years ago in revels or brawls, which then seemed to bring but innocuous joy and easy triumph, now began to gnaw and grind. But when Cutts reappeared with coarse viands and the brandy bottle, Jasper shook off the sense of pain, as does a wounded wild beast that can still devour; and after regaling fast and ravenously, he emptied half the bottle at a draught, and felt himself restored and fresh.

"Shall you fling yourself amongst the swell fellows who hold their club here, General?" asked Cutts; "'tis a bad trade, every year it gets worse. Or have you not some higher game in your eye?"

"I have higher game in my eye. One bird I marked down this very night. But that may be slow work, and uncertain. I have in this pocketbook a bank to draw upon meanwhile."

"How?—forged French *billets de banque?*—dangerous."

"Pooh!—better than that—letters which prove theft against a respectable rich man."

"Ah, you expect hush-money?"

"Exactly so. I have good friends in London."

"Among them, I suppose, that affectionate 'adopted mother,' who would have kept you in such order."

"Thousand thunders! I hope not. I am not a superstitious man, but I fear that women as if she were a witch, and I believe she is one. You remember black Jean, whom we call *Sans-culotte.* He would have filled a churchyard with his own brats for a five-franc piece; but he would not have crossed a churchyard alone at night for a thousand Naps. Well, that woman to me is what a churchyard was to black Jean. No; if she is in London, I have but to go to her house and say, 'Food, shelter, money;' and I would rather ask Jack Ketch for a rope.

"How do you account for it, General? She does not beat you—she is not your wife. I have seen many a stout fellow, who would stand fire without blinking, show the white feather at a scold's tongue. But then he must be spliced to her—"

"Cutts, that griffin does not scold—she preaches. She wants to make me spooney, Cutts—she talks of my young days, Cutts—she wants to blight me into what she calls an honest man, Cutts;—the virtuous dodge! She snubs and cows me, and frightens me out of my wits, Cutts. For I do believe that the witch is determined to have me, body and soul, and to marry me some day in spite of myself, Cutts. And if you ever see me about to be clutched in those horrible paws, poison me with ratsbane, or knock me on the head, Cutts."

The little man laughed a little laugh, sharp and elritch, at the strange cowardice of the stalwart daredevil. But Jasper did not echo the laugh.

"Hush!" he said, timidly, "and let me have a bed, if you can; I have not slept in one for a week, and my nerves are shaky."

The imp lighted a candle-end at the gas-lamp and conducted Losely up the stairs to his own sleeping-room, which was less comfortless than might be supposed. He resigned his bed to the wanderer, who flung himself on it, rags and all. But sleep was no more at his command than it is a king's.

"Why the —— did you talk of that witch?" he cried peevishly to Cutts, who was compos-

ing himself to rest on the floor. "I swear I fancy I feel her sitting on my chest like a nightmare."

He turned with a vehemence which shook the walls, and wrapt the coverlid round him, plunging his head into its folds. Strange though it seem to the novice in human nature —to Jasper Losely the woman who had so long lived but for one object—viz. to save him from the gibbet, was as his evil genius, his haunting fiend. He had conceived a profound terror of her, from the moment he perceived that she was resolutely bent upon making him honest. He had broken from her years ago—fled—resumed his evil courses—hid himself from her —in vain. Wherever he went—there went she. He might baffle the police, not her. Hunger had often forced him to accept her aid. As soon as he received it, he hid from her again, burying himself deeper and deeper in the mud, like a persecuted tench. He associated her idea with all the ill-luck that had befallen him. Several times some villanous scheme on which he had counted to make his fortune had been baffled in the most mysterious way; and just when baffled — and their seemed no choice but to cut his own throat or some one else's—up turned grim Arabella Crane, in the iron-grey gown, and with the iron-grey ringlets—hatefully, awfully beneficent—offering food, shelter, gold—and some demoniacal, honorable work. Often had he been in imminent peril from watchful law or treacherous accomplice.

She had warned and saved him, as she had saved him from the fell Gabrielle Desmarets, who, unable to bear the sentence of penal servitude, after a long process, defended with astonishing skill, and enlisting the romantic sympathies of young France, had contrived to escape into another world by means of a subtle poison concealed about her *distinguée* person, and which she had prepared years ago with her own bloodless hands, and no doubt scientifically tested its effect on others. The cobra cappella is gone at last! "*Souviens-toi de ta Gabrielle*," O Jasper Losely! But why Arabella Crane should thus continue to watch over him whom she no longer professed to love—how she should thus have acquired the gift of ubiquity and the power to save him—Jasper Losely could not conjecture. The whole thing seemed to him weird and supernatural. Most truly did he say that she had *cowed him*. He had often longed to strangle her; when absent from her, had often resolved upon that act of gratitude. The moment he came in sight of her stern, haggard face—her piercing lurid eyes—the moment he heard her slow, dry voice in some such sentences as these—"Again you come to me in your trouble, and ever shall. Am I not still as your mother, but with a wife's fidelity, till death us do part? There is the portrait of what you were—look at it, Jasper. Now turn to the glass—see what you are. Think of the fate of Gabrielle Desmartes! But for me, what, long since, had been your own? But I will save you—I have sworn it. You shall be wax in these hands at last;"—the moment that voice thus claimed and insisted on redeeming him, the ruffian felt a cold shudder—his courage oozed—he could no more have nerved his arm against her than a Thug would have lifted his against the dire goddess of his murderous superstition.

Jasper could not resist a belief that the life of this dreadful protectress was, somehow or other, made essential to his—that, were she to die, he should perish in some ghastly and preternatural expiation. But for the last few months he had, at length, escaped from her—diving so low, so deep into the mud, that even her net could not mesh him. Hence, perhaps, the imminence of the perils from which he had so narrowly escaped—hence the utterness of his present destitution. But man, however vile, whatever his peril, whatever his destitution, was born free, and loves liberty. Liberty to go to Satan in his own way was to Jasper Losely a supreme blessing compared to that benignant compassionate *espionage*, with its relentless eye and restraining hand. Alas and alas! deem not this perversity unnatural in that headstrong self-destroyer! How many are there whom not a grim hard-featured Arabella Crane, but the long-suffering, divine, omniscient, gentle Providence itself, seeks to warn, to aid, to save—and is shunned, and loathed, and fled from, as if it were an evil genius! How many are there who fear nothing so much as the being made good in spite of themselves?—how many?—who can count them?

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CHAPTER VI.

The public man needs but one patron—viz., THE LUCKY MOMENT.

"AT his house in Carlton Gardens, Guy Darrell, Esq., for the season."

Simple insertion in the pompous list of Fashionable Arrivals!—the name of a plain commoner imbedded in the amber which glitters with so many coronets and stars! Yet such is England, with all its veneration for titles, that the eyes of the public passed indifferently over the rest of that chronicle of illustrious "whereabouts," to rest with interest, curiosity, speculation, on the unemblazoned name which but a day before had seemed slipped out of date—obsolete as that of an actor who figures no more in play-bills. Unquestionably the sensation excited was due, in much, to the ambiguous voices" which Colonel Morley had disseminated throughout the genial atmosphere of club-rooms. "Arrived in London for the season!"—he, the orator, once so famous, long so forgotten, who had been out of the London world for the space of more than half a generation. "Why now?—why for the season?"—Quoth the Colonel: "He is still in the prime of life as a public man, and—a CRISIS is at hand!"

But that which gave weight and significance to Alban Morley's hints, was the report in the newspapers of Guy Darrell's visit to his old constituents, and of the short speech he had addressed to them, to which he had so slightly referred in his conversation with Alban. True, the speech *was* short; true, it touched but little on passing topics of political interest—rather alluding, with modesty and terseness to the contests and victories of a former day. But still, in the few words there was the swell of the old clarion—the wind of the Paladin's horn which woke Fontarabian echoes.

It is astonishing how capricious, how sudden, are the changes in value of a public man. All depends upon whether the public want, or believe, they want the man; and that is a question upon which the public do not know their own minds a week before; nor do they always keep in the same mind, when made up, for a week together. If they do not want a man—if he do not hit the taste, nor respond to the exigency of the time—whatever his eloquence, his abilities, his virtues, they push him aside, or cry him down. Is he wanted?—does the mirror of the moment reflect his image?—that mirror is an intense magnifier; his proportions swell—they become gigantic. At that moment the public wanted some man; and the instant the hint was given, "Why not Guy Darrell?" Guy Darrell was seized upon as *the* man wanted.

It was one of those times in our Parliamentary history when the public are out of temper with all parties—when recognized leaders have contrived to damage themselves—when a Cabinet is shaking, and the public neither care to destroy nor to keep it;—a time, too, when the country seemed in some danger, and when, mere men of business held unequal to the emergency, whatever name suggested associations of vigor, eloquence, genius, rose to a premium above its market price in times of tranquillity and tape. Without effort of his own—by the mere force of the undercurrent—Guy Darrell was thrown up from oblivion into note. He could not form a cabinet—certainly not; but he might help to bring a cabinet together. reconcile jarring elements, adjust disputed questions, take in such government some high place, influence its councils, and delight a public weary of the oratory of the day, with the eloquence of a former race. For the public is ever a *laudator temporis acti*, and whatever the authors or the orators immediately before it, were those authors and orators Homers and Ciceros, would still shake a disparaging head, and talk of these degenerate days, as Homer himself talked ages before Leonidas stood in the pass of Thermopylæ, or Miltiades routed Asian armaments at Marathon. Guy Darrell belonged to a former race. The fathers of those young Members rising now into fame, had quoted to their sons his pithy sentences, his vivid images; and added, as Fox added when quoting Burke, "but you should have heard and seen the man!"

Heard and seen the man! But there he was again!—come up as from a grave—come up to the public just when such a man was wanted. Wanted how?—wanted where? Oh, somehow and somewhere! There he is! make the most of him.

The house in Carlton Gardens is prepared, the establishment mounted. Thither flock all the Viponts—nor they alone; all the chiefs of all parties—nor they alone; all the notabilities

of our grand metropolis. Guy Darrell might be startled at his own position; but he comprehended its nature, and it did not discompose his nerves. He knew public life well enough to be aware how much the popular favor is the creature of an accident. By chance he had nicked the time; had he thus come to town the season before, he might have continued obscure, a man like Guy Darrell not being wanted then. Whether with or without design, his bearing confirmed and extended the effect produced by his reappearance. Gracious, but modestly reserved—he spoke little, listened beautifully. Many of the questions which agitated all around him had grown up into importance since his day of action; nor in his retirement had he traced their progressive development, with their changeful effects upon men and parties. But a man who has once gone deeply into practical politics might sleep in the Cave of Trophonius for twenty years, and find, on waking, very little to learn. Darrell regained the level of the day, and seized upon all the strong points on which men were divided, with the rapidity of a prompt and comprehensive intellect—his judgment perhaps the clearer from the freshness of long repose, and the composure of dispassionate survey.

When partisans wrangled as to what should have been done, Darrell was silent; when they asked what should *be* done, out came one of his terse sentences, and a knot was cut. Meanwhile it is true this man, round whom expectations grouped and rumor buzzed, was in neither House of Parliament; but that was rather a delay to his energies than a detriment to his consequence. Important constituencies, anticipating a vacancy, were already on the look-out for him; a smaller constituency, in the interim, Carr Vipont undertook to procure him any day. There was always a Vipont ready to accept something—even the Chiltern Hundreds. But Darrell, not without reason, demurred at re-entering the House of Commons after an absence of seventeen years. He had left it with one of those rare reputations which no wise man likes rashly to imperil. The Viponts sighed. He would certainly be more useful in the Commons than the Lords, but still in the Lords he would be of great use. They would want a debating lord, perhaps a lord acquainted with law in the coming Crisis;—if he preferred the peerage? Darrell demurred still. The man's modesty was insufferable—his style of speaking might not suit that august assembly; and as to law—he could never now be a law lord—he should be but a ci-devant advocate, affecting the part of a judicial amateur.

In short, without declining to re-enter public life, seeming, on the contrary, to resume all his interest in it, Darrell contrived with admirable dexterity to elude for the present all overtures pressed upon him, and even to convince his admirers, not only of his wisdom but of his patriotism in that reticence. For certainly he thus managed to exercise a very considerable influence—his advice was more sought, his suggestions more heeded, and his power in reconciling certain rival jealousies was perhaps greater than would have been the case if he had actually entered either House of Parliament, and thrown himself exclusively into the ranks, not only of one party, but of one section of a party. Nevertheless, such suspense could not last very long; he must decide at all events before the next session. Once he was seen in the arena ot his old triumphs, on the benches devoted to strangers distinguished by the Speaker's order. There, recognized by the older members, eagerly gazed at by the younger, Guy Darrell listened calmly, throughout a long field-night, to voices that must have roused from forgotten graves, kindling and glorious memories; voices of those—veterans now—by whose side he had once struggled for some cause which he had then, in the necessary exaggeration of all honest enthusiasm, identified with a nation's life-blood. Voices too of the old antagonists over whose routed arguments he had marched triumphant amidst applauses that the next day rang again through England from side to side. Hark, the very man with whom, in the old battle-days, he had been the most habitually pitted, is speaking now! His tones are embarrassed—his argument confused. Does he know who listens yonder! Old members think so—smile, whisper each other, and glance significantly where Darrell sits.

Sits, as became him, tranquil, respectful, intent, seemingly, perhaps really, unconscious of the sensation he excites. What an eye for an orator! how like the eye in a portrait; it seems to fix on each other eye that seeks it—steady,

fascinating. Yon distant members, behind the Speaker's chair, at the far distance, feel the light of that eye travel towards them. How lofty and massive, among all those rows of human heads, seems that forehead, bending slightly down, with the dark strong line of the weighty eyebrow! But what is passing within that secret mind? Is there mournfulness in the retrospect? is their eagerness to renew the strife? Is that interest in the Hour's debate feigned or real? Impossible for him who gazed upon that face to say. And that eye would have seemed to the gazer to read himself through to the heart's core, long ere the gazer could hazard a single guess as to the thoughts beneath that marble forehead—as to the emotions within the heart over which, in old senatorial fashion, the arms were folded with so conventional an ease.

CHAPTER VII.

Darrell and Lionel.

Darrell had received Lionel with some evident embarrassment, which soon yielded to affectionate warmth. He took to the young man whose fortunes he had so improved; he felt that with the improved fortunes the young man's whole being was improved;—assured position, early commune with the best social circles, in which the equality of fashion smooths away all disparities in rank, had softened in Lionel much of the wayward and morbid irritability of his boyish pride; but the high spirit, the generous love of independence, the scorn of mercenary calculation, were strong as ever; these were in the grain of his nature. In common with all who in youth aspire to be one day noted from "the undistinguishable many," Lionel had formed to himself a certain ideal standard, above the ordinary level of what the world is contented to call honest, or esteem clever. He admitted into his estimate of life the heroic element, not undesirable even in the most practical point of view, for the world is so in the habit of decrying—of disbelieving in high motives and pure emotions—of daguerreotyping itself with all its ugliest wrinkles, stripped of the true bloom that brightens, of the true expression that redeems, those defects which it invites the sun to limn, that we shall never judge human nature aright, if we do not set out in life with our gaze on its fairest beauties, and our belief in its latent good. In a word, we should begin with the Heroic, if we would learn the Human.

But though to himself Lionel thus secretly prescribed a certain superiority of type, to be sedulously aimed at, even if never actually attained, he was wholly without pedantry and arrogance towards his own contemporaries. From this he was saved not only by good-nature, animal spirits, frank hardihood, but by the very affluence of ideas which animated his tongue, colored his language, and, whether to young or old, wise or dull, made his conversation racy and original. He was a delightful companion; and if he had taken much instruction from those older and wiser than himself, he so bathed that instruction in the fresh fountain of his own lively intelligence, so warmed it at his own beating impulsive heart that he could make an old man's gleanings from experience seem a young man's guesses into truth. Faults he had, of course—chiefly the faults common at his age; amongst them, perhaps, the most dangerous were—firstly, carelessness in money matters; secondly, a distaste for advice in which prudence was visibly predominant. His tastes were not in reality extravagant; but money slipped through his hands, leaving little to show for it; and when his quarterly allowance became due, ample though it was—too ample, perhaps—debts wholly forgotten started up to seize hold of it. And debts as yet being manageable, were not regarded with sufficient horror. Paid or put aside, as the case might be, they were merely looked upon as bores. Youth is in danger till it learn to look upon them as furies. For advice, he took it with pleasure, when clothed with elegance and art—when it addressed ambition—when it exalted the loftier virtues. But advice, practical and prosy, went in at one ear and out at the other. In fact, with many talents, he had yet no adequate ballast of common sense; and if ever he get enough to steady his bark through life's trying voyage, the necessity of so much dull weight must be forcibly stricken home less to his reason than his imagination or his heart. But if, somehow or other, he get it not, I will not insure his vessel.

I know not if Lionel Haughton had genius; he never assumed that he had; but he had something more like genius than that prototype—RESOLVE—of which he boasted to the artist. He had YOUTH—real youth—youth of mind, youth of heart, youth of soul. Lithe and supple as he moved before you, with the eye to which light or dew sprung at once from a nature vibrating to every lofty, every tender thought, he seemed more than young—the incarnation of youth.

Darrell took to him at once. Amidst all the engagements crowded on the important man, he contrived to see Lionel daily. And what may seem strange, Guy Darrell felt more at home with Lionel Haughton than with any of his own contemporaries—than even with Alban Morley. To the last, indeed he opened speech with less reserve of certain portions of the past, or of certain projects in the future. But still, even there, he adopted a tone of half-playful, half-mournful satire, which might be in itself disguise. Alban Morley, with all his good qualities, was a man of the world; as a man of the world, Guy Darrell talked to him. But it was only a very small part of Guy Darrell the Man, of which the world could say "mine."

To Lionel, he let out, as if involuntarily, the more amiable, tender, poetic attributes of his varying, complex, uncomprehended character; not professedly confiding, but not taking pains to conceal. Hearing what worldlings would call "Sentiment" in Lionel, he seemed to glide softly down to Lionel's own years, and talk "sentiment" in return. After all, this skilled lawyer, this noted politician, had a great dash of the boy still in him. Reader, did you ever meet a really clever man who had not?

CHAPTER VIII.

Saith a very homely proverb (pardon its vulgarity), "You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear." But a sow's ear is a much finer work of art than a silk purse. And grand, indeed, the mechanism who could make a sow's ear out of a silk purse, or conjure into creatures of flesh and blood the sarcenet and *tulle* of a London drawing-room.

"MAMMA," asked Honoria Carr Vipont, "what sort of a person was Mrs. Darrell?"

"She was not in our set, my dear," answered Lady Selina. "The Vipont Crookes are just one of those connections with which, though, of course, one is civil to all connections, one is more or less intimate, according as they take after the Viponts or after the Crookes. Poor woman! she died just before Mr. Darrell entered Parliament and appeared in society. But I should say she was not an agreeable person. Not nice," added Lady Selina, after a pause, and conveying a world of meaning in that conventional monosyllable.

"I suppose she was very accomplished—very clever?"

"Quite the reverse, my dear. Mr. Darrell was exceedingly young when he married—scarcely of age. She was not the sort of woman to suit him."

"But at least she must have been very much attached to him—very proud of him?"

Lady Selina glanced aside from her work, and observed her daughter's face, which evinced an animation not usual to a young lady of a breeding so lofty, and a mind so well disciplined.

"I don't think," said Lady Selina, "that she was proud of him. She would have been proud of his station, or rather of that to which his fame and fortune would have raised her, had she lived to enjoy it. But for a few years after her marriage they were very poor; and though his rise at the bar was sudden and brilliant, he was long wholly absorbed in his profession, and lived in Bloomsbury. Mrs. Darrell was not proud of *that*. The Crookes are generally fine—give themselves airs—marry into great houses if they can—but we can't naturalize them—they always remain Crookes—useful connections, very! Carr says we have not a more useful—but third-rate, my dear. All the Crookes are bad wives, because they are not satisfied with their own homes, but are always trying to get into great people's homes. Not very long before she died, Mrs. Darrell took her friend and relation, Mrs. Lyndsay, to live with her. I suspect it was not from affection, or any great consideration for Mrs. Lyndsay's circumstances (which were indeed those of actual destitution, till—thanks to Mr. Darrell—she won her lawsuit), but simply because she looked to Mrs. Lyndsay to get her into our set. Mrs. Lyndsay was a great favorite with all of us, charming manners—perfectly correct, too—thorough Vipont—

thorough gentlewoman—but artful! Oh, *so* artful! She humored poor Mrs. Darrell's absurd vanity; but she took care not to injure herself. Of course, Darrell's wife, and a Vipont—though only a Vipont Crooke—had free passport into the outskirts of good society, the great parties, and so forth. But there it stopped; even I should have been compromised if I had admitted into our set a woman who was bent on compromising herself. Handsome—in a bad style—not the Vipont *tournure;* and not only silly and flirting, but—(we are alone, keep the secret)—decidedly vulgar, my dear."

"You amaze me! How such a man——" Honoria stopped, coloring up to the temples.

"Clever men," said Lady Selina, "as a general rule, do choose the oddest wives! The cleverer a man is, the more easily, I do believe, a woman can take him in. However, to do Mr. Darrell justice, he has been taken in only once. After Mrs. Darrell's death, Mrs. Lyndsay, I suspect, tried her chance, but failed. Of course, she could not actually stay in the same house with a widower who was then young, and who had only to get rid of a wife to whom one was forced to be shy, in order to be received into our set with open arms; and, in short, to be of the very best *monde.* Mr. Darrell came into Parliament immensely rich (a legacy from an old East Indian, besides his own professional savings)—took the house he has now, close by us. Mrs. Lyndsay was obliged to retire to a cottage at Fulham. But as she professed to be a second mother to poor Matilda Darrell, she contrived to be very much at Carlton Gardens; her daughter Caroline was nearly always there, profiting by Matilda's masters; and I did think that Mrs. Lyndsay would have caught Darrell—but you papa said 'No,' and he was right, as he always is. Nevertheless, Mrs. Lyndsay would have been an excellent wife to a public man—so popular—knew the world so well—never made enemies till she made an enemy of poor dear Montfort; but that was natural. By-the-bye, I must write to Caroline. Sweet creature! but how absurd, shutting herself up as if she were fretting for Montfort! That's so like her mother—heartless, but full of propriety."

Here Carr Vipont and Colonel Morley entered the room. "We have just left Darrell," said Carr; "he will dine here to-day, to meet our cousin Alban. I have asked *his* cousin, young Haughton, and * * * * and * * * *, *your* cousins, Selina—(a small party of cousins)—so lucky to find Darrell disengaged."

"I ventured to promise," said the Colonel, addressing Honoria in an under voice, "that Darrell should hear you play Beethoven."

Honoria.—"Is Mr. Darrell so fond of music, then?"

Colonel Morley.—"One would not have thought it. He keeps a secretary at Fawley who plays the flute. There's something very interesting about Darrell. I wish you could hear his ideas on marriage and domestic life—more freshness of heart than in the young men one meets nowadays. It may be prejudice; but it seems to me that the young fellows of the present race, if more sober and staid than we were, are sadly wanting in character and spirit—no warm blood in their veins. But I should not talk thus to a demoiselle who has all those those young fellows at her feet."

"Oh," said Lady Selina, over-hearing, and with a half laugh, "Honoria thinks much as you do; she finds the young men so insipid—all like one another—the same set phrases."

"The same stereotyped ideas," added Honoria, moving away with a gesture of calm disdain.

"A very superior mind hers," whispered the Colonel to Carr Vipont. "*She'll* never marry a fool."

Guy Darrell was very pleasant at "the small family dinner-party." Carr was always popular in his manners—the true old House of Commons manner, which was very like that of a gentlemanlike public school. Lady Selina, as has been said before, in her own family circle was natural and genial. Young Carr, there, without his wife, more pretentious than his father—being a Lord of the Admiralty—felt a certain awe of Darrell, and spoke little, which was much to his own credit, and to the general conviviality. The other members of the symposium, besides Lady Selina, Honoria, and a younger sister, were but Darrell, Lionel, and Lady Selina's two cousins; elderly peers—one with the garter, the other in the cabinet—jovial men who had been wild fellows once in the same mess-room, and still joked at each other whenever they met as they met now.

Lionel, who remembered Vance's description of Lady Selina, and who had since heard her spoken of in society as a female despot who carried to perfection the arts by which despots flourish, with majesty to impose, and caresses to deceive—an Aurungzebe in petticoats—was sadly at a loss to reconcile such portraiture with the good-humored, motherly woman who talked to him of her home, her husband, her children, with open fondness and becoming pride, and who, far from being so formidably clever as the world cruelly gave out, seemed to Lionel rather below par in her understanding; strike from her talk its kindliness, and the residue was very like twaddle.

After dinner, various members of the Vipont family dropped in—asked impromptu by Carr or by Lady Selina, in hasty three-cornered notes, to take that occasion of renewing their acquaintance with their distinguished connection. By some accident, amongst those invited there were but few young single ladies; and by some other accident, those few were all plain. Honoria Vipont was unequivocally the belle of the room. It could not but be observed that Darrell seemed struck with her—talked with her more than with any other lady; and when she went to the piano, and played that great air of Bethoven's, in which music seems to have got into a knot that only fingers the most artful can unravel, Darrell remained in his seat aloof and alone, listening, no doubt, with ravished attention. But just as the air ended, and Honoria turned round to look for him, he was gone.

Lionel did not linger long after him. The gay young man went, thence, to one of those vast crowds which seemed convened for a practical parody of Mr. Bentham's famous proposition—contriving the smallest happiness for the greatest number.

It was a very good house, belonging to a very great person. Colonel Morley had procured and invitation for Lionel, and said, "Go; *you* should be seen there." Colonel Morley had passed the age of growing into society—no such cares for the morrow could add a cubit to his conventional stature. One amongst a group of other young men by the doorway, Lionel beheld Darrell, who had arrived before him listening to a very handsome young lady, with an attention quite as earnest as that which had gratified the superior mind of the well-educated Honoria. A very handsome young lady certainly, but not with a superior mind, nor supposed hitherto to have found young gentlemen "insipid." Doubtless she would henceforth do so. A few minutes after, Darrell was listening again—this time to another young lady, generally called "fast." If his attentions to her were not marked, hers to him were. She rattled on to him volubly, laughed, pretty hoyden, at her own sallies, and seemed at last so to fascinate him by her gay spirits that he sate down by her side; and the playful smile on his lips—lips that had learned to be so gravely firm—showed that he could enter still into the mirth of childhood; for surely to the time-worn man the fast young lady must have seemed but a giddy child.

Lionel was amused. Could this be the austere recluse whom he had left in the shades of Fawley? Guy Darrell, at his years, with his dignified repute, the object of so many nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles—could *he* descend to be that most frivolous of characters, a male coquet? Was he in earnest—was his vanity duped? Looking again, Lionel saw in his kinsman's face a sudden return of the sad despondent expression which had moved his own young pity in the solitudes of Fawley. But in a moment the man roused himself—the sad expression was gone. Had the girl's merry laugh again chased it away? But Lionel's attention was now drawn from Darrell himself to the observations murmured round him, of which Darrell was the theme.

"Yes, he is bent on marrying again! I have it from Alban Morley—immense fortune—and so young-looking, any girl might fall in love with such eyes and forehead; besides, what a jointure he could settle! . . . . Do look at that girl, Flora Vyvyan, trying to make a fool of him. She can't appreciate that kind of man, and she would not be caught by his money—does not want it. . . . I wonder she is not afraid of him. He is certainly quizzing her. . . . The men think her pretty—I don't. . . . They say he is to return to Parliament, and have a place in the Cabinet. . . . No! he has no children living. . . . very natural he should marry again. . . . A nephew!—you are quite mistaken. Young Haughton is no nephew—a very distant connection—could not expect to be the heir. . . . It was given out though, at Paris. The Duchess thought so.

and so did Lady Jane. They'll not be so civil to young Haughton now. . . . Hush—"

Lionel, wishing to hear no more, glided by, and penetrated farther into the throng. And then, as he proceeded, with those last words on his ear, the consciousness came upon him that his position had undergone a change. Difficult to define it; to an ordinary bystander, people would have seemed to welcome him cordially as ever. The gradations of respect in polite society are so exquisitely delicate, that it seems only by a sort of magnetism that one knows from day to day whether one has risen or declined. A man has lost high office, patronage, power, never, perhaps, to regain them. People don't turn their backs on him; their smiles are as gracious, their hands as flatteringly extended. But that man would be dull as a rhinoceros if he did not feel—as every one who accosts him feels—that he has descended in the ladder. So with all else. Lose even your fortune, it is not the next day in a London drawing-room that your friends look as if you were going to ask them for five pounds. Wait a year or so for that. But if they have just heard you are ruined, you will *feel* that they have heard it, let them bow ever so courteously, smile ever so kindly. Lionel at Paris, in the last year or so, had been more than fashionable: he had been the fashion—courted, run after, petted, quoted, imitated. That evening he felt as an author may feel who has been the rage, and without fault of his own is so no more. The rays that had gilt him had gone back to the orb that lent. And they who were most genial still to Lionel Haughton, were those who still most respected thirty-five thousand pounds a year—in Guy Darrell!

Lionel was angry with himself that he felt galled. But in his wounded pride there was no mercenary regret—only that sort of sickness which comes to youth when the hollowness of worldly life is first made clear to it. From the faces round him there fell that glamour by which the *amour propre* is held captive in large assemblies, where the *amour propre* is flattered. "Magnificent, intelligent audience," thinks the applauded actor. "Delightful party," murmurs the worshipped beauty. Glamour! glamour! Let the audience yawn while the actor mouths; let the party neglect the beauty to adore another, and straightway the "magnificent audience" is an "ignorant public," and the "delightful party" a "heartless world."

CHAPTER IX.

Escaped from a London Drawing-room, flesh once more tingles and blood flows—Guy Darrell explains to Lionel Haughton why he holds it a duty to be—an old fool.

Lionel Haughton glided through the disenchanted rooms, and breathed a long breath of relief when he found himself in the friendless streets.

As he walked slow and thoughtful on, he suddenly felt a hand upon his shoulder, turned, and saw Darrell.

"Give me your arm, my dear Lionel; I am tired out. What a lovely night! What sweet scorn in the eyes of those stars that we have neglected for yon flariag lights."

Lionel.—"Is it scorn?—is it pity? Is it but serene indifference?"

Darrell.—"As we ourselves interpret; if scorn be present in our own hearts, it will be seen in the disc of Jupiter. Man, egotist though he be exacts sympathy from all the universe. Joyous, he says to the sun, 'Lfie-giver, rejoice with me.' Grieving, he says to the moon, 'Pensive one, thou sharest my sorrow.' Hope for fame; a star is its promise! Mourn for the dead; a star is the land of reunion! Say to earth, 'I have done with thee;' to Time, 'Thou hast nought to bestow;' and all Space cries aloud, 'The earth is a speck, thine inheritance infinity. Time melts while thou sighest. The discontent of a mortal is the instinct that proves thee immortal.' Thus construing Nature, Nature is our companion, our consoler. Benign as the playmate, she lends herself to our shifting humors. Serious as the teacher, she responds to the steadier inquiries of reason. Mystic and hallowed as the priestess, she keeps alive by dim oracles that spiritual yearning within us, in which, from savage to sage—through all dreams, through all creeds—thrills the sense of a link with Divinity. Never, therefore, while conferring with Nature, is Man wholly alone, nor is she a single companion with uniform shape. Ever new, ever various, she can pass from gay to severe—from fancy to science—quick as thought passes from the dance of

a leaf, from the tint of a rainbow, to the theory of motion, the problem of light. But lose Nature—forget or dismiss her—make companions, by hundreds, of men who ignore her, and I will not say with the poet, 'This is solitude.' But in the commune, what stale monotony, what weary sameness!"

Thus Darrell continued to weave together sentence with sentence, the intermediate connection of meaning often so subtle, that when put down on paper it requires effort to discern it. But it was his peculiar gift to make clear when spoken, what in writing would seem obscure. Look, manner, each delicate accent in a voice wonderfully distinct in its unrivalled melody, all so aided the sense of mere words, that it is scarcely extravagant to say he might have talked an unknown language, and a listener would have understood. But, understood or not, those sweet intonations it was such delight to hear, that any one with nerves alive to music would have murmured, "Talk on for ever." And in this gift lay one main secret of the man's strange influence over all who came familiarly into his intercourse; so that if Darrell had ever bestowed confidential intimacy on any one not by some antagonistic idiosyncrasy steeled against its charm, and that intimacy had been withdrawn, a void never to be refilled must have been left in the life thus robbed.

Stopping at his door, as Lionel, rapt by the music, had forgotten the pain of the reverie so bewitchingly broken, Darrell detained the hand held out to him, and said, "No, not yet—I have something to say to you: come in; let me say it now."

Lionel bowed his head, and in surprised conjecture followed his kinsman up the lofty stairs, into the same comfortless stately room that has been already described. When the servant closed the door, Darrell sank into a chair. Fixing his eyes upon Lionel with almost parental kindness, and motioning his young cousin to sit by his side, close, he thus began:—

"Lionel, before I was your age I was married—I was a father. I am lonely and childless now. My life has been moulded by a solemn obligation which so few could comprehend, that I scarce know a man living beside yourself to whom I would frankly confide it. Pride of family is a common infirmity—often petulent with the poor, often insolent with the rich; but rarely, perhaps, out of that pride do men construct a positive binding duty, which at all self-sacrifice should influence the practical choice of life. As a child, before my judgment could discern how much of vain superstition may lurk in our reverence for the dead, my whole heart was engaged in a passionate dream, which my waking existence became vowed to realize. My father!—my lip quivers, my eyes moisten as I recall him, even now,—my father!—I loved him so intensely!—the love of childhood how fearfully strong it is! All in him was so gentle, yet so sensitive—chivarly without its armor. I was his constant companion: he spoke to me unreservedly, as a poet to his muse. I wept at his sorrows—I chafed at his humiliations. He talked of ancestors as he thought of them; to him they were beings like the old Lares—not dead in graves, but images ever present on household hearths. Doubtless he exaggerated their worth—as their old importance. Obscure, indeed, in the annals of empire, their deeds and their power, their decline and fall. Not so thought he; they were to his eyes the moon-track in the ocean of history—light on the waves over which they had gleamed—all the ocean elsewhere dark! With him thought I; as my father spoke, his child believed.

But what to the eyes of the world was this inheritor of a vaunted name?—a threadbare, slighted, rustic pedant—no station in the very province in which mouldered away the last lowly dwelling-place of his line. By lineage high above most nobles, in position below most yeomen. He had learning, he had genius; but the studies to which they were devoted only served yet more to impoverish his scanty means, and led rather to ridicule than to honor. Not a day but what I saw on his soft features the smart of a fresh sting, the gnawing of a new care. Thus, as a boy, feeling in myself a strength inspired by affection, I came to him, one day as he sate grieving, and kneeling to him, said, 'Father, courage yet a little while; I shall soon be man, and I swear to devote myself as man to revive the old fading race so prized by you; to rebuild the House that, by you so loved, is loftier in my eyes than all the heraldry of kings.' And my father's face brightened, and his voice blest me; and I rose up—ambitious!" Darrell

paused, heaved a short, quick sigh, and then rapidly continued:—

"I was fortunate at the university. That was a day when chiefs of party looked for recruits amongst young men who had given the proofs and won the first-fruits of emulation and assiduity. For statesmanship then was deemed an art which, like that of war, needs early discipline. I had scarcely left college when I was offered a seat in Parliament, by the head of the Viponts, an old Lord Montfort. I was dazzled but for one moment—I declined the next. The fallen House of Darrell needed wealth, and Parliamentary success, in its higher honors, often require wealth—never gives it. It chanced that I had a college acquaintance with a young man named Vipont Crooke. His grandfather, one of the numberless Viponts, had been compelled to add the name of Crooke to his own, on succeeding to the property of some rich uncle, who was one of the numberless Crookes. I went with this college acquaintance to visit the old Lord Montfort, at his villa near London, and thence to the country-house of the Vipont Crookes. I staid at the last two or three weeks.

While there, I received a letter from the elder Fairthorn, my father's bailiff, entreating me to come immediately to Fawley, hinting at some great calamity. On taking leave of my friend and his family, something in the manner of his sister startled and pained me—an evident confusion, a burst of tears—I know not what. I had never sought to win her affections. I had an ideal of the woman I could love. It did not resemble her. On reaching Fawley, conceive the shock that awaited me. My father was like one heart-stricken. The principal mortgagee was about to foreclose—Fawley about to pass for ever from the race of the Darrells. I saw that the day my father was driven from the old house would be his last on earth. What means to save him?—how raise the pitiful sum—but a few thousands—by which to release from the spoiler's gripe those barren acres which all the lands of the Seymour or the Gower could never replace in my poor father's eyes? My sole income was a college fellowship, adequate to all my wants, but useless for sale or loan. I spent the night in vain consultation with Fairthorn. There seemed not a hope.

Next morning came a letter from young Vipont Crooke. It was manly and frank, though somewhat coarse. With the consent of his parents he offered me his sister's hand, and a dowry of £10,000. He hinted, in excuse for his bluntness, that, perhaps from motives of delicacy, if I felt a preference for his sister, I might not deem myself rich enough to propose, and—but it matters not what else he said. You foresee the rest. My father's life could be saved from despair—his beloved home be his shelter to the last. That dowry would more than cover the paltry debt upon the lands. I gave myself not an hour to pause. I hastened back to the house to which fate had led me. But," said Darrell, proudly, "do not think I was base enough, even with such excuses, to deceive the young lady. I told her what was true; that I could not profess to her the love painted by romance-writers and poets; but that I loved no other, and that if she deigned to accept my hand, I should studiously consult her happiness and gratefully confide to her my own.

I said also, what was true, that if she married me, ours must be for some years a life of privation and struggle; that even the interest of her fortune must be devoted to my father while he lived, though every shilling of its capital would be settled on herself and her children. How I blessed her when she accepted me, despite my candor!—how earnestly I prayed that I might love and cherish, and requite her!" Darrell paused, in evident suffering. "And thank heaven! I have nothing on that score wherewith to reproach myself. And the strength of that memory enabled me to bear and forbear more than otherwise would have been possible to my quick spirit, and my man's heart. My dear father! his death was happy—his home was saved—he never knew at what sacrifice to his son! He was gladdened by the first honors my youth achieved. He was resigned to my choice of a profession, which, though contrary to his antique prejudices, that allowed to the representative of the Darrells no profession but the sword, still promised the wealth which would secure his name from perishing.

He was credulous of my future, as if I had uttered not a vow, but a prediction. He had blest my union, without forseeing its sorrows. He had embraced my first-born—true, it was

a girl, but it was one link onward from ancestors to posterity. And almost his last words were these; 'You *will* restore the race—you *will* revive the name! and my son's children will visit the antiquary's grave, and learn gratitude to him for all that his idle lessons taught to your healthier vigor.' And I answered: 'Father, your line shall not perish from the land; and when I am rich and great, and lordships spread far round the lowly hall that your life ennobled, I will say to your grandchildren, '"Honor ye and your son's sons, while a Darrell yet treads the earth—honor him to whom I owe every thought which nerved me to toil for what you who come after me may enjoy."'

"And so the old man, whose life had been so smileless, died smiling."

By this time Lionel had stolen Darrell's hand into his own—his heart swelling with childlike tenderness, and the tears rolling down his cheeks.

Darrell gently kissed his young kinsman's forehead, and, extricating himself from Lionel's clasp, paced the room, and spoke on while pacing it.

"I made, then, a promise; it is not kept. No child of mine survives to be taught reverence to my father's grave. My wedded life was not happy: its record needs no words. Of two children born to me, both are gone. My son went first. I had thrown my life's life into him—a boy of energy, of noble promise. 'Twas for him I began to build that baffled fabric—'*Sepulchri immemor.*' For him I bought, acre on acre, all the land within reach of Fawley—lands twelve miles distant. I had meant to fill up the intervening space—to buy out a mushroom earl whose woods and corn-fields lie between. I was scheming the purchase—scrawling on the county map—when they brought the news that the boy I had just taken back to school was dead—drowned bathing on a calm summer eve. No, Lionel. I must go on.

That grief I have wrestled with—conquered. I was widowed then. A daughter still left—the first born, whom my father had blest on his deathbed. I transferred all my love, all my hopes, to her. I had no vain preference for male heirs. Is a race less pure that runs on through the female line? Well, my son's death was merciful compared to——" Again Darrell stopped—again hurried on. "Enough! all is forgiven in the grave! I was then still in the noon of man's life, free to form new ties. Another grief that I cannot tell you; it is not all conquered yet. And by that grief the last verdure of existence was so blighted, that—that—in short, I had no heart for nuptial altars—for the social world. Years went by. Each year I said, 'Next year the wound will be healed; I have time yet.' Now age is near, the grave not far; now, if ever, I must fulfil the promise that cheered my father's deathbed. Nor does that duty comprise all my motives. If I would regain healthful thought, manly action, for my remaining years, I must feel that one haunting memory is exorcised, and for ever laid at last. It can be so only—whatever my risk of new cares—whatever the folly of the hazard at my age—be so only by—by——"

Once more Darrell paused, fixed his eyes steadily on Lionel, and, opening his arms, cried out, "Forgive me, my noble Lionel, that I am not contented with an heir like you; and do not you mock at the old man who dreams that woman may love him yet, and that his own children may inherit his father's home."

Lionel sprang to the breast that opened to him; and if Darrell had planned how best to remove from the young man's mind for ever the possibility of one selfish pang, no craft could have attained his object like that touching confidence before which the disparities between youth and age literally vanished. And both made equal, both elevated alike, verily I know not which at the moment felt the elder or the younger! Two noble hearts, intermingled in one emotion, are set free from all time save the present; par each with each, they meet as brothers twin-born.

BOOK SEVENTH.

CHAPTER I.

Vignettes for the next Book of Beauty.

"I QUITE agree with you, Alban; Honoria Vipont is a very superior young lady."

"I knew you would think so!" cried the Colonel, with more warmth than usual to him.

"Many years since," resumed Darrell, with reflective air, "I read Miss Edgeworth's novels; and in conversing with Miss Honoria Vipont, methinks I confer with one of Miss Edgeworth's heroines—so rational, so prudent, so well-behaved—so free from silly romantic notions—so replete with solid information, moral philosophy and natural history—so sure to regulate her watch and her heart to the precise moment, for the one to strike, and the other to throb—and to marry at last a respectable steady husband, whom she will win with dignity, and would lose with—decorum! A very superior girl indeed." *

"Though your description of Miss Vipont is satirical," said Alban Morley, smiling in spite of some irritation, "yet I will accept it as panegyric; for it conveys, unintentionally, a just idea of the qualities that make an intelligent companion and a safe wife. And those are the qualities we must look to, if we marry at our age. We are no longer boys,'" added the Colonel, sententiously.

DARRELL.—"Alas, no! I wish we were. But the truth of your remark is indisputable. Ah, look! Is not that a face which might make an octogenarian forget that he is not a boy?—what regular features!—and what a blush!"

The friends were riding in the park; and as Darrell spoke, he bowed to a young lady, who, with one or two others, passed rapidly by in a barouche. It was that very handsome young lady to whom Lionel had seen him listening so attentively in the great crowd, for which Carr Vipont's family party had been deserted.

"Yes; Lady Adela is one of the loveliest girls in London," said the Colonel, who had also lifted his hat as the barouche whirled by—"and amiable too: I have known her ever since she was born. Her father and I are great friends—an excellent man, but stingy. I had much difficulty in arranging the eldest girl's marriage with Lord Bolton, and am a trustee in the settlements. If you feel a preference for Lady Adela, though I don't think she would suit you so well as Miss Vipont, I will answer for her father's encouragement and her consent. 'Tis no drawback to you, though it is to most of her admirers, when I add, 'There's nothing with her!"

"And nothing in her! which is worse," said Darrell. "Still, it is pleasant to gaze on a beautiful landscape, even though the soil be barren."

COLONEL MORLEY.—"That depends upon whether you are merely the artistic spectator of the landscape, or the disappointed proprietor of the soil."

"Admirable!" said Darrell; "you have disposed of Lady Adela. So ho! so ho!" Darrell's horse (his old high-mettled horse, freshly sent to him from Fawley, and in spite of the five years that had added to its age, of spirit made friskier by long repose) here put down its ears—lashed out—and indulged in a bound which would have unseated many a London rider. A young Amazon, followed hard by some two or three young gentlemen and their grooms, shot by, swift and reckless as a hero at Balaclava. But with equal sud-

* Darrell speaks—not the author. Darrell is unjust to the more exquisite female characters of a Novelist admirable for strength of sense, correctness of delineation, terseness of narrative, and lucidity of style—nor less admirable for the unexaggerated nobleness of sentiment by which some of her heroines are notably distinguished.

denness, as she caught sight of Darrell—whose hand and voice had already soothed the excited nerves of his steed—the Amazon wheeled round and gained his side. Throwing up her veil, she revealed a face so prettily arch—so perversely gay—with eyes of radiant hazel, and fair locks half loosened from their formal braid—that would have beguiled resentment from the most insensible—reconciled to danger the most timid.

And yet there was really a grace of humility in the apologies she tendered for her discourtesy and thoughtlessness. As the girl reined her light palfrey by Darrell's side—turning from the young companions who had now joined her, their hackneys in a foam—and devoting to his ear all her lively overflow of happy spirits, not untempered by a certain deference, but still apparently free from dissimulation—Darrell's grand face lighted up—his mellow laugh, unrestrained, though low, echoed her sportive tones;—her youth, her joyousness were irresistibly contagious. Alban Morley watched observant, while interchanging talk with her attendant comrades, young men of high *ton*, but who belonged to that *jeunesse dorée*, with which the surface of life patrician is fretted over—young men with few ideas, fewer duties—but with plenty of leisure—plenty of health—plenty of money in their pockets—plenty of debts to their tradesmen—daring at Melton—scheming at Tattersall's—pride to maiden aunts—plague to thrifty fathers—fickle lovers, but solid matches—in brief, fast livers, who get through their youth betimes, and who, for the most part, are middle-aged before they are thirty—tamed by wedlock—sobered by the responsibilities that come with the cares of property and the dignities of rank—undergo abrupt metamorphosis into chairmen of quarter sessions—county members, or decorous peers—their ideas enriched as their duties grow—their opinions, once loose as willows to the wind, stiffening into the palisades of fenced propriety—valuable, busy men, changed as Henry V., when, coming into the cares of state, he said to the chief Justice, "There is my hand;" and to Sir John Falstaff,

> "I know thee not, old man;
> Fall to thy prayers!"

But, meanwhile the *élite* of this *jeunesse dorée* glittered round Flora Vyvyan: not a regular beauty like Lady Adela—not a fine girl like Miss Vipont, but such a light, faultless figure—such a pretty, radiant face—more womanly for affecting to be man-like—Hebe aping Thalestris. Flora, too, was heiress—an only child—spoilt, wilful—not at all accomplished (my belief is that accomplishments are thought great bores by the *jeunesse dorée*)—no accomplishment except horsemanship, with a slight knack at billiards, and the capacity to take three whiffs from a Spanish *cigarette*. That last was adorable—four offers had been advanced to her hand on that merit alone.—(N.B. Young ladies do themselves no good with the *jeunesse dorée*, which, in our time, is a lover that rather smokes than "sighs, like furnace," by advertising their horror of cigars). You would suppose that Flora Vyvyan must be coarse—vulgar perhaps; not at all; she *piquante*—original; and did the oddest things with the air and look of the highest breeding.

Fairies cannot be vulgar, no matter what they do; they may take the strangest liberties—pinch the maids—turn the house topsy-turvy; but they are ever the darlings of grace and poetry. Flora Vyvyan was a fairy. Not peculiarly intellectual herself, she had a veneration for intellect; those fast young men were the last persons likely to fascinate that fast young lady. Women are so perverse; they always prefer the very people you would least suspect—the antithesis to themselves. Yet it is possible that Flora Vyvyan can have carried her crotchets to so extravagant a degree as to have designed the conquest of Guy Darrell—ten years older than her own father? She, too, an heiress—certainly not mercenary; she who had already refused better worldly matches than Darrell himself was—young men, handsome men, with coronets on the margin of their note-paper and the panels of their broughams! The idea seemed preposterous; nevertheless, Alban Morley, a shrewd observer, conceived that idea, and trembled for his friend.

At last the young lady and her satellites shot off, and the Colonel said cautiously, "Miss Vyvan is—alarming."

DARRELL.—"Alarming! the epithet requires construing."

COLONEL MORLEY.—"The sort of girl who might make a man of our years really and literally—an old fool!"

DARRELL.—"Old fool such a man must be if girls of any sort are permitted to make him a greater fool than he was before. But I think that, with those pretty hands resting on one's arm-chair, or that sunny face shining into one's study windows, one might be a very happy old fool—and that is the most one can expect!"

COLONEL MORLEY (checking an anxious groan).—"I am afraid, my poor friend, you are far gone already. No wonder Honoria Vipont fails to be appreciated. But Lady Selina has a maxim—the truth of which my experience attests—'the moment it comes to women, the most sensible men are the'——"

"Oldest fools!" put in Darrell. "If Mark Antony made such a goose of himself for that painted harridan Cleopatra what would he have done for a blooming Juliet! Youth and high spirits! Alas! why are these to be unsuitable companions for us, as we reach that climax in time and sorrow—when to the one we are grown the most indulgent, and of the other have the most need? Alban, that girl, if her heart were really won—her wild nature wisely mastered—gently guided—would make a true prudent, loving, admirable wife—"

"Heavens!" cried Alban Morley.

"To such a husband," pursued Darrell, unheeding the ejaculation, "as——Lionel Haughton. What say you?"

"Lionel—Oh, I have no objection at all to that; but he's too young yet to thing of marriage—a mere boy. Besides, if you yourself marry, Lionel could scarcely aspire to a girl of Miss Vyvyan's birth and fortune."

"Ho, not aspire! That boy at least shall not have to woo in vain from the want of fortune. The day I marry—if ever that day come—I settle on Lionel Haughton and his heirs five thousand a-year; and if, with gentle blood, youth, good looks, and a heart of gold, that fortune does not allow him to aspire to any girl whose hand he covets, I can double it, and still be rich enough to buy a superior companion in Honoria Vipont—"

MORLEY.—"Don't say buy—"

DARRELL.—"Ay, and still be young enough to catch a butterfly in Lady Adela—still be bold enough to chain a panther in Flora Vyvyan. Let the world know—your world in each nook of its gaudy auction-mart—that Lionel Haughton is no pauper-cousin — no penniless fortune-hunter. I wish that world to be kind to him while he is yet young, and can enjoy it. Ah, Morley, Pleasure, like Punishment, hobbles after us, *pede claudo*. What would have delighted us yesterday does not catch us up till to-morrow, and yesterday's pleasure is not the morrow's. A pennyworth of sugar-plums would have made our eyes sparkle when we were scrawling pothooks at a preparatory school, but no one gave us sugar-plums then. Now every day at dessert France heaps before us her daintiest sugar-plums in gilt *bonbonnières*. Do you ever covet them? I never do. Let Lionel have his sugar-plums in time. And as we talk, there he comes. Lionel, how are you?"

"I resign you to Lionel's charge now," said the Colonel, glancing at his watch. "I have an engagement — troublesome. Two silly friends of mine have been quarrelling—high words—in an age when duels are out of the question. I have promised to meet another man, and draw up the form for a mutual apology. High words are so stupid nowadays. No option but to swallow them up again if they were as high as steeples. Adieu for the present. We meet to-night at Lady Dulcett's concert?"

"Yes," said Darrell. "I promised Miss Vyvyan to be there, and keep her from disturbing the congregation. You, Lionel, will come with me."

LIONEL (embarrassed).—"No; you must excuse me. I have long been engaged elsewhere."

"That's a pity," said the Colonel, gravely. "Lady Dulcett's concert is just one of the places where a young man should—be seen." Colonel Morley waved his hand with his usual languid elegance, and his hack cantered off with him, stately as a charger, easy as a rocking-horse.

"Unalterable man," said Darrell, as his eye followed the horseman's receding figure. "Through all the mutations on Time's dusty high-road—stable as a milestone. Just what Alban Morley was as a school-boy he is now; and if mortal span were extended to the age of the patriarchs, just what Alban Morley is now, Alban Morley would be a thousand years hence. I don't mean externally, of course; wrinkles will come—cheeks will fade. But these are trifles: man's body is

a garment, as Socrates said before me, and every seven years, according to the physiologists, man has a new suit, fibre and cuticle, from top to toe. The interior being that wears the clothes is the same in Alban Morley. Has he loved, hated, rejoiced, suffered? Where is the sign? Not one. At school, as in life, doing nothing, but decidedly somebody—respected by small boys, petted by big boys—an authority with all. Never getting honors—arm in arm with those who did; never in scrapes, advising those who were; imperturbable, immovable, calm above mortal cares as an Epicurian deity. What can wealth give that he has not got? In the houses of the richest he chooses his room. Talk of ambition, talk of power—he has their rewards without an effort. True prime-minister of all the realm he cares for; Good society has not a vote against him—he transacts its affairs, he knows its secrets—he wields its patronage. Ever requested to do a favor—no man great enough to do him one. Incorruptible, yet versed to a fraction in each man's price; impeccable, yet confidant in each man's foibles; smooth as silk, hard as adamant; impossible to wound, vex, annoy him—but not insensible; thoroughly kind. Dear, dear Alban! nature never polished a finer gentleman out of a solider block of man!" Darrell's voice quivered a little as he completed in earnest affection the sketch begun in playful irony, and then, with a sudden change of thought, he resumed lightly,—

"But I wish you to do me a favor, Lionel. Aid me to repair a fault in good breeding, of which Alban Morley would never have been guilty. I have been several days in London, and not yet called on your mother. Will you accompany me now to her house and present me?"

"Thank you, thank you; you will make her so proud and happy; but may I ride on and prepare her for your visit?"

"Certainly; her address is—"

"Gloucester Place, No. —."

"I will meet you there in half an hour."

CHAPTER II.

"Let Observation, with expansive view,
Survey mankind from China to Peru,"

—and Observation will everywhere find, indispensable to the happiness of woman, A VISITING ACQUAINTANCE.

LIONEL knew that Mrs. Haughton would that day need more than usual forewarning of a visit from Mr. Darrell. For the evening of that day Mrs. Haughton proposed "to give a party." When Mrs. Haughton gave a party, it was a serious affair. A notable and bustling housewife, she attended herself to each preparatory detail. It was to assist at this party that Lionel had resigned Lady Dulcett's concert. The young man, reluctantly acquiescing in the arrangements by which Alban Morely had engaged him a lodging of his own, seldom or never let a day pass without gratifying his mother's proud heart by an hour or two spent in Gloucester Place, often to the forfeiture of a pleasant ride, or other tempting excursion, with gay comrades. Difficult in London life, and at the full of its season, to devote an hour or two to visits, apart from the tract chalked out by one's very mode of existence—difficult to cut off an hour so as not to cut up a day. And Mrs. Haughton was exacting—nice in her choice as to the exact slice in the day. She took the prime of the joint. She liked her neighbors to see the handsome, elegant young man dismount from his charger or descend from his cabriolet, just at the witching hour when Gloucester Place was fullest. Did he go to a levee, he must be sure to come to her before he changed his dress, that she and Gloucester Place might admire him in uniform. Was he going to dine at some very great house, he must take her in his way (though no street could be more out of his way), that she might be enabled to say in the parties to which she herself repaired—"There is a great dinner at Lord So-and-so's to-day; my son called on me before he went there. If he had been disengaged, I should have asked permission to bring him here."

Not that Mrs. Haughton honestly designed, nor even wished to draw the young man from the dazzling vortex of high life into her own little currents of dissipation. She was much too proud of Lionel to think that her friends were grand enough for him to honor *their*

houses by his presence. She had in this, too, a lively recollection of her lost Captain's doctrinal views of the great world's creed. The Captain had flourished in the time when Impertinence, installed by Brummell, though her influence was waning, still schooled her oligarchs, and maintained the etiquette of her court; and even when his *mésalliance* and his debts had cast him out of his native sphere, he lost not all the original brightness of an exclusive. In moments of connubial confidence, when owning his past errors, and tracing to his sympathizing Jessie the causes of his decline, he would say, "'Tis not a man's birth, nor his fortune, that gives him his place in society—it depends on his conduct, Jessie. He must not be seen bowing to snobs, nor should his enemies track him to the haunts of vulgarians. I date my fall in life to dining with a horrid man who lent me £100, and lived in Upper Baker Street. His wife took my arm from a place they called a drawing-room (the Captain as he spoke was on a fourth floor), to share some unknown food which they called a dinner (the Captain at that moment would had welcomed a rasher). The woman went about blabbing—the thing got wind—for the first time my character received a soil. What is a man without character! and character once sullied, Jessie, a man becomes reckless. Teach my boy to beware of the first false step—no association with *parvenus*. Don't cry, Jessie—I don't mean that he is to cut *you*—relations are quite different from other people—nothing so low as cutting relations. I continued, for instance, to visit Guy Darrell, though he lived at the back of Holborn, and I actually saw him once in brown beaver gloves. But he was a relation. I have even dined at his house, and met odd people there—people who lived also at the back of Holborn. But he did not ask me to go to *their* houses, and if he had, I must have cut him."

By reminiscenses of this kind of talk, Lionel was saved from any design of Mrs. Haughton's to attract his orbit into the circle within which she herself moved. He must come to the parties she gave—illumine or awe odd people *there*. That was a proper tribute to maternal pride. But had they asked him to their parties, she would have been the first to resent such a liberty.

Lionel found Mrs. Haughton in great bustle. A gardener's cart was before the street door. Men were bringing in a grove of evergreens, intended to border the staircase, and make its exiguous ascent still more difficult. The refreshments were already laid out in the dining-room. Mrs. Haughton, with scissors in hand, was cutting flowers to fill the *épergne*, but darting to and fro, like a dragon-fly, from the dining-room to the hall, from the flowers to the evergreens.

"Dear me, Lionel, is that you? Just tell me, you who go to all those grandees, whether the ratafia-cakes should be opposite to the sponge-cakes, or whether they would not go better—thus—at cross-corners?"

"My dear mother, I never observed—I don't know. But make haste—take off that apron—have these doors shut—come up-stairs. Mr. Darrell will be here very shortly. I have ridden on to prepare you."

"Mr. Darrell—TO-DAY!—How could you let him come? O Lionel, how thoughtless you are! You should have some respect for your mother—I *am* your mother, sir."

"Yes, my own dear mother—don't scold—I could not help it. He is so engaged, so sought after; if I had put him off to-day, he might never have come, and—

"Never have come! Who is Mr. Darrell, to give himself such airs?—Only a lawyer after all," said Mrs. Haughton, with majesty.

"Oh mother, that speech is not like you. He is our benefactor—our—"

"Don't, don't say more—I was very wrong—quite wicked—only my temper, Lionel dear. Good Mr. Darrell! I shall be so happy to see him—see him, too, in this house that I owe to him—see him by your side! I think I shall fall down on my knees to him."

And her eyes began to stream.

Lionel kissed the tears away fondly. "That's my own mother now indeed—now I am proud of you, mother; and how well you look! I am proud of that too."

"Look well—I am not fit to be seen, this figure—though perhaps an elderly quiet gentleman like good Mr. Darrell does not notice ladies much. John, John, make haste with those plants. Gracious me! you've got your coat off!—put it on—I expect a gentleman—I'm at home, in the front drawing-room—no—that's all set out—the back drawing-room,

John. Send Susan to me. Lionel, do just look at the supper-table; and what is to be done with the flowers, and—"

The rest of Mrs. Haughton's voice, owing to the rapidity of her ascent, which affected the distinctness of her utterance, was lost in air. She vanished at culminating point—within her chamber.

CHAPTER III.

Mrs. Haughton at Home to Guy Darrell.

THANKS to Lionel's activity, the hall was discenumbered—the plants hastily stowed away—the parlor closed on the festive preparations—and the footman in his livery waiting at the door—when Mr. Darrell arrived. Lionel himself came out and welcomed his benefactor's footstep across the threshold of the home which the generous man had provided for the widow.

If Lionel had some secret misgivings as to the result of this interview, they were soon and most happily dispelled. For, at the sight of Guy Darrell leaning so affectionately on her son's arm, Mrs. Haughton mechanically gave herself up to the impulse of her own warm, grateful, true woman's heart. And her bound forward, her seizure of Darrell's hand—her first fervent blessing—her after words, simple but eloquent with feeling—made that heart so transparent, that Darrell looked it through with respectful eyes.

Mrs. Haughton was still a pretty woman, and with much of that delicacy of form and outline which constitutes the gentility of person. She had a sweet voice too, except when angry. Her defects of education, of temper, or of conventional polish, were not discernible in the overflow of natural emotion. Darrell had come resolved to be pleased if possible. Pleased he was, much more than he had expected. He even inly accepted for the deceased Captain excuses which he had never before admitted to himself. The linen-draper's daughter was no coarse presuming dowdy, and in her candid rush of gratitude there was not that underbred servility which Darrell had thought perceptible in her epistolary compositions. There was elegance too, void both of gaudy ostentation and penurious thrift, in the furniture and arrangements of the room. The income he gave to her was not spent with slatternly waste or on tawdry gewgaws. To ladies in general, Darrell's manner was extremely attractive—not the less winning because of a certain gentle shyness which, implying respect for those he addressed, and a modest undervaluing of his own merit, conveyed compliment and soothed self-love. And to that lady in especial such gentle shyness was the happiest good-breeding.

In short, all went off without a hitch, till, as Darrell was taking leave, Mrs. Haughton was reminded by some evil genius of her evening party, and her very gratitude, longing for some opportunity to requite obligation, prompted her to invite the kind man to whom the facility of giving parties was justly due. She had never realized to herself, despite all that Lionel could say, the idea of Darrell's station in the world—a lawyer who had spent his youth at the back of Holborn, whom the stylish Captain had deemed it a condescension not to cut, might indeed become very rich; but he could never be the fashion. "Poor man," she thought, he must be very lonely. He is not, like Lionel, a young dancing man. A quiet little party, with people of his own early rank and habits, would be more in his way than those grand places to which Lionel goes. I can but ask him—I ought to ask him. What would he say if I did not ask him? Black ingratitude indeed, if he were not asked!" All these ideas rushed through her mind in a breath, and as she clasped Darrell's extended hand in both her own, she said, "I have a little party to-night!"—and paused. Darrell remaining mute, and Lionel not suspecting what was to ensue, she continued: "There may be some good music—young friends of mine—sing charmingly—Italian!"

Darrell bowed. Lionel began to shudder.

"And if I might presume to think it would amuse you Mr. Darrell, oh, I should be so happy to see you!—so happy!"

"Would you?" said Darrell, briefly. "Then I should be a churl if I did not come. Lionel will escort me. Of course you expect him too?"

"Yes, indeed. Though *he* has so many fine places to go to—and it can't be exactly what he is used to—yet he is such a dear good boy that he gives up all to gratify his mother."

Lionel, in agonies, turned an unfilial back, and looked steadily out of the window; but Darrell, far too august to take offence where none was meant, only smiled at the implied reference to Lionel's superior demand in the fashionable world, and replied, without even a touch of his accustomed irony,—"And to gratify his mother is a pleasure I thank you for inviting me to share with him."

More and more at her ease, and charmed with having obeyed her hospitable impulse, Mrs. Haughton, following Darrell to the landing-place, added—

"And if you like to play a quiet rubber—"

"I never touch cards—I abhor the very name of them, ma'am," interrupted Darrell, somewhat less gracious in his tones.

He mounted his horse; and Lionel, breaking from Mrs. Haughton, who was assuring him that Mr. Darrell was not at all what she expected, but really quite the gentleman—nay, a much grander gentleman than even Colonel Morley—regained his kinsman's side, looking abashed and discomfited. Darrell, with the kindness which his fine quick intellect enabled him so felicitously to apply, hastened to relieve the young guardsman's mind.

"I like your mother much—very much," said he, in his most melodious accents. "Good boy! I see now why you gave up Lady Dulcett. Go and take a canter by yourself, or with younger friends, and be sure that you call on me so that we may be both at Mrs. Haughton's by ten o'clock. I can go later to the concert if I feel inclined."

He waved his hand, wheeled his horse, and trotted off toward the fair suburban lanes that still proffer to the denizens of London glimpses of rural fields, and shadows from quiet hedgerows. He wished to be alone; the sight of Mrs. Haughton had revived recollections of bygone days—memory linking memory in painful chain—gay talk with his younger schoolfellow—that wild Charlie, now in his grave—his own laborious youth, resolute aspirings, secret sorrows—and the strong man felt the want of that solitary self-commune, without which self-conquest is unattainable

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CHAPTER IV.

Mrs. Haughton at home miscellaneously. Little parties are useful in bringing people together. One never knows whom one may meet.

GREAT kingdoms grow out of small beginnings. Mrs. Haughton's social circle was described from a humble centre. On coming into possession of her easy income and her house in Gloucester Place, she was naturally seized with the desire of an appropriate "visiting acquaintance." The accomplishment of that desire had been deferred awhile by the excitement of Lionel's departure for Paris, and the IMMENSE TEMPTATION to which the attentions of the spurious Mr. Courtenay Smith had exposed her widowed solitude: but no sooner had she recovered from the shame and anger with which she had discarded that showy impostor, happily in time, than the desire became the more keen; because the good lady felt that with a mind so active and restless as hers, a visiting acquaintance might be her best preservative from that sense of loneliness which disposes widows to lend the incautious ear to adventurous wooers.

After her experience of her own weakness in listening to a sharper, and with a shudder at her escape, Mrs, Haughton made a firm resolve never to give her beloved son a father-in-law. No. she would distract her thoughts—she would have a VISITING ACQUAINTANCE. She commenced by singling out such families as at various times had been her genteelest lodgers—now lodging elsewhere. She informed them by polite notes of her accession of consequence and fortune, which she was sure they would be happy to hear; and these notes, left with the card of "Mrs. Haughton, Gloucester Place," necessarily produced respondent notes and correspondent cards. Gloucester Place then prepared itself for a party. The *ci-devant* lodgers urbanely attended the summons. In their turn they gave parties. Mrs. Haughton was invited. From each such party she bore back a new draught into her "social circle." Thus, long before the end of five years, Mrs. Haughton had attained her object. She had a "VISITING ACQUAINTANCE!" It is true that she was not particular; so that there was a new somebody at whose house a card could be left, or a morning call achieved—who could help to fill her rooms, or whose rooms she

could contribute to fill in turn, she was contented. She was no tuft-hunter. She did not care for titles. She had no visions of a column in the *Morning Post*. She wanted, kind lady, only a vent for the exuberance of her social instincts; and being proud, she rather liked acquaintances who looked up to, instead of looking down on her.

Thus Gloucester Place was invaded by tribes not congenial to its natural civilized atmosphere. Hengists and Horsas, from remote Anglo-Saxon districts, crossed the intervening channel, and insulted the British nationality of that salubrious district. To most of such immigrators, Mrs. Haughton, of Gloucester Place, was a personage of the highest distinction. A few others of prouder status in the world, though they owned to themselves that there was a sad mixture at Mrs. Haughton's house, still, once seduced there, came again—being persons who, however independent in fortune, or gentle by blood, had but a small "visiting acquaintance" in town;—fresh from economical colonization on the Continent, or from distant provinces in these three kingdoms. Mrs. Haughton's rooms were well lighted. There was music for some, whist for others; tea, ices, cakes, and a crowd for all.

At ten o'clock—the rooms already nearly filled, and Mrs. Haughton, as she stood at the door, anticipating with joy that happy hour when the staircase would become inaccessible—the head attendant, sent with the ices from the neighboring confectioner, announced in a loud voice, "Mr. Haughton—Mr. Darrell."

At that latter name a sensation thrilled the assembly—the name so much in every one's mouth at that period, nor least in the mouths of the great middle class, on whom—though the polite may call them "a sad mixture," cabinets depend—could not fail to be familiar to the ears of Mrs. Haughton's "visiting acquaintance." The interval between his announcement and his ascent from the hall to the drawing-room was busily filled up by murmured questions to the smiling hostess,—"Darrell! what! *the* Darrell! Guy Darrell! greatest man of the day! A connection of yours? Bless me, you don't say so?" Mrs. Haughton began to feel nervous. Was Lionel right? Could the man who had only been a lawyer at the back of Holborn really be, now, such a very, very great man—greatest man of the day? Nonsense!

"Ma'am," said one pale, puff-checked, flat-nosed gentleman, in a very large white waistcoat, who was waiting by her side till a vacancy in one of the two whist-tables should occur. "Ma'am, I'm an enthusiastic admirer of Mr. Darrell. You say he is a connection of yours? Present me to him."

Mrs. Haughton nodded flutteringly, for, as the gentleman closed his request, and tapped a large gold snuff-box, Darrell stood before her—Lionel close at his side, looking positively sheepish. The great man said a few civil words, and was gliding into the room to make way for the press behind him, when he of the white waistcoat, touching Mrs. Haughton's arm, and staring Darrell full in the face, said, very loud: "In these anxious times, public men dispense with ceremony. I crave an introduction to Mr. Darrell." Thus pressed, poor Mrs. Haughton, without looking up, muttered out, "Mr. Adolphus Poole—Mr. Darrell," and turned to welcome fresh comers.

"Mr. Darrell," said Mr. Poole, bowing to the ground, "this *is* an honor."

Darrell gave the speaker one glance of his keen eye, and thought to himself,—"If I were still at the bar I should be sorry to hold a brief for that fellow." However, he returned the bow formally, and, bowing again at the close of a highly complimentary address with which Mr. Poole followed up his opening sentence, expressed himself "much flattered," and thought he had escaped; but wherever he went through the crowd, Mr. Poole contrived to follow him, and claim his notice by remarks on the affairs of the day—the weather—the funds—the crops. At length Darrell perceived, sitting aloof in a corner, an excellent man whom indeed it surprised him to see in a London drawing-room, but who, many years ago, when Darrell was canvassing the enlightened constituency of Ouzelford, had been on a visit to the chairman of his committee—an influential trader—and having connections in the town—and, being a very high character, had done him good service in the canvass. Darrell rarely forgot a face, and never a service. At any time he would have been glad to see the worthy man once more, but at that time he was grateful indeed.

"Excuse me," he said bluntly to Mr. Poole,

"but I see an old friend." He moved on, and thick as the crowd had become, it made way with respect as to royalty, for the distinguished orator. The buzz of admiration as he passed —louder than in drawing-rooms more refined —would have had sweeter music than Grisi's most artful quaver to a vainer man—nay, once on a time to him. But—sugar-plums come too late! He gained the corner, and roused the solitary sitter.

"My dear Mr. Hartopp, do you not remember me—Guy Darrell?"

"Mr. Darrell!" cried the ex-mayor of Gatesboro', rising, "who could think that you would remember *me?*"

"What! not remember those ten stubborn voters, on whom, all and singly, I had lavished my powers of argument in vain? You came, and with the brief words, 'John—Ned—Dick —oblige me—vote for Darrell!' the men were convinced—the votes won. That's what I call eloquence"—(*sotto voce*—"Confound that fellow! still after me!"—Aside to Hartopp)— "Oh! may I ask who is that Mr.—what's his name—there—in the white waistcoat?"

"Poole," answered Hartopp. "Who is he, sir? A speculative man. He is connected with a new Company—I am told it answers. Williams (that's my foreman — a very long head he has too) has taken shares in the Company, and wanted me to do the same, but 'tis not in my way. And Mr. Poole may be a very honest man, but he does not impress me with that idea. I have grown careless; I know I am liable to be taken in—I was so once—and therefore I avoid 'Companies' upon principle —especially when they promise thirty per cent., and work copper mines—Mr. Poole has a copper mine."

"And deals in brass—you may see it in his face! But you are not in town for good, Mr. Hartopp? If I remember right, you were settled at Gatesboro' when we last met."

"And so I am still—or rather in the neighborhood. I am gradually retiring from business, and grown more and more fond of farming. But I have a family, and we live in enlightened times, when children require a finer education than their parents had. Mrs. Hartopp thought my daughter Anna Maria was in need of some 'finishing lessons'—very fond of the harp is Anna Maria—and so we have taken a house in London for six weeks. That's Mrs. Hartopp yonder, with the bird on her head—bird of Paradise, I believe—Williams says birds of that kind never rest. That bird is an exception—it has rested on Mrs. Hartopp's head for hours together, every evening since we have been in town."

"Significant of your connubial felicity, Mr. Hartopp."

"May it be so of Anna Maria's. She is to be married when her education is finished—married, by the by, to a son of your old friend Jessop, of Ouzelford; and between you and me, Mr. Darrell, that is the reason why I consented to come to town. Do not suppose that I would have a daughter finished unless there was a husband at hand who undertook to be responsible for the results."

"You retain your wisdom, Mr. Hartopp; and I feel sure that not even your fair partner could have brought you up to London unless you had decided on the expediency of coming. Do you remember that I told you the day you so admirably settled a dispute in our committee-room, 'it was well you were not born a king, for you would have been an irresistible tyrant'?"

"Hush! hush!" whispered Hartopp, in great alarm, "if Mrs. H. should hear you! What an observer you are, sir. I thought I was a judge of character—but I was once deceived. I dare say you never were."

"You mistake," answered Darrell, wincing, "*you* deceived! How?"

"Oh, a long story, sir. It was an elderly man—the most agreeable, interesting companion—a vagabond nevertheless—and such a pretty bewitching little girl with him, his grandchild. I thought he might have been a wild harum-scarum chap in his day, but that he had a true sense of honor"—(Darrell, wholly uninterested in this narrative, suppressed a yawn, and wondered when it would end). "Only think, sir, just as I was saying to myself, 'I know character—I never was taken in,' down comes a smart fellow—the man's own son—and tells me—or rather he suffers a lady who comes with him to tell me—that this charming old gentleman of high sense of honor was a returned convict—been transported for robbing his employer."

Pale, breathless, Darrell listened, not unheeding now. "What was the name of—of—"

"The convict? He called himself Chap-

man, but the son's name was Losely—Jasper."

"Ah!" faltered Darrell, recoiling, "and you spoke of a little girl?"

"Jasper Losely's daughter; he came after her with a magistrate's warrant. The old miscreant had carried her off,—to teach her his own swindling ways, I suppose. Luckily she was then in my charge. I gave her back to her father, and the very respectable-looking lady he brought with him. Some relation, I presume."

"What was her name, do you remember?"

"Crane."

"Crane!—Crane!" muttered Darrell, as if trying in vain to tax his memory with that name. "So he said the child was his daughter—are you sure?"

"Oh, of course he said so, and the lady too. But can you be acquainted with them, sir?"

"I?—no! Strangers to me, except by repute. Liars—infamous liars! But have the accomplices quarrelled—I mean the son and father—that the father should be exposed and denounced by the son?"

"I conclude so. I never saw them again. But you believe the father really was, then, a felon, a convict—no excuse for him—no extenuating circumstances? There was something in that man, Mr. Darrell, that made one love him—positively love him; and when I had to tell him that I had given up the child he trusted to my charge, and saw his grief, I felt a criminal myself."

Darrell said nothing, but the character of his face was entirely altered—stern, hard, relentless—the face of an inexorable judge. Hartopp, lifting his eyes suddenly to that countenance, recoiled in awe.

"You think I was a criminal!" he said, piteously.

"I think we are both talking too much, Mr. Hartopp, of a gang of miserable swindlers, and I advise you to dismiss the whole remembrance of intercourse with any of them from your honest breast, and never to repeat to other ears the tale you have poured into mine. Men of honor should crush down the very thought that approaches them to knaves."

Thus saying, Darrell moved off with abrupt rudeness, and passing quickly back through the crowd, scarcely noticed Mrs. Haughton by a retreating nod, nor heeded Lionel at all, but hurried down the stairs. He was impatiently searching for his cloak in the back parlor, when a voice behind said, "Let me assist you, sir—do;" and turning round with petulant quickness, he beheld again Mr. Adolphus Poole. It requires an habitual intercourse with equals to give perfect and invariable control of temper to a man of irritable nerves and frank character; and though, where Darrell really liked, he had much sweet forbearance, and where he was indifferent much stately courtesy, yet, when he was offended, he could be extremely uncivil. "Sir," he cried, almost stamping his foot, "your importunities annoy me; I request you to cease them."

"Oh, I ask your pardon," said Mr. Poole, with an angry growl. "I have no need to force myself on any man. But I beg you to believe that if I presumed to seek your acquaintance, it was to do you a service, sir—yes, a private service, sir." He lowered his voice into a whisper, and laid his finger on his nose—"There's one Jasper Losely, sir—eh? Oh, sir, I'm no mischief-maker. I respect family secrets. Perhaps I might be of use, perhaps not."

"Certainly not to me, sir," said Darrell, flinging the cloak he had now found across his shoulders, and striding from the house. When he entered his carriage, the footman stood waiting for orders. Darrell was long in giving them. "Anywhere for half an hour—to St. Paul's, then home."

But on returning from this objectless plunge into the City, Darrell pulled the check-string—"To Belgrave Square—Lady Dulcett's."

The concert was half over; but Flora Vyvyan had still guarded, as she had promised, a seat beside herself for Darrell, by lending it for the present to one of her obedient vassals. Her face brightened as she saw Darrell enter and approach. The vassal surrendered the chair. Darrell appeared to be in the highest spirits; and I firmly believe that he was striving to the utmost in his power—what?—to make himself agreeable to Flora Vyvyan? No; to make Flora Vyvyan agreeable to himself. The man did not presume that a fair young lady could be in love with him; perhaps he blieved *that*, at his years, to be impossible. But he asked what seemed much easier, and was much harder—he asked to be himself in love.

CHAPTER V

It is asserted by those learned men who have devoted their lives to the study of the manners and habit of insect society, that when a spider has lost its last web, having exhausted all the glutinous matter wherewith to spin another, it still protracts its innocent existence, by obtruding its nippers on some less warlike but more respectable spider, possessed of a convenient home and an airy larder. Observant moralists have noticed the same peculiarity in the Man-Eater, or Pocket-Cannibal.

ELEVEN o'clock, A.M., Samuel Adolphus Poole, Esq., is in his parlor,—the house one of those new dwellings which yearly spring up north of the Regent's Park—dwellings that, attesting the eccentricity of the national character, task the fancy of the architect and the gravity of the beholder—each tenement so tortured into contrast with the other, that, on one little rood of ground, all ages seemed blended, and all races encamped. No. 1 is an Egyptian tomb !—Pharaohs may repose there ! No. 2 is a Swiss *chalet*—William Tell may be shooting in its garden ! Lo ! the severity of Doric columns—Sparta is before you ! Behold that Gothic porch—you are rapt to the Norman days ! Ha ! those Elizabethan mullions—Sidney and Raleigh, rise again ! Ho ! the trellises of China—come forth, Confucius, and Commissioner Yeh ! Passing a few paces, we are in the land of the Zegri and Abencerrage—

"Land of the dark-eyed Maid and dusky Moor."

Mr. Poole's house is called Alhambra Villa ! Moorish verandahs—plate-glass windows, with cusped heads and mahogany sashes—a garden behind, a smaller one in front—stairs ascending to the doorway under a Saracenic portico, between two pedestalled lions that resemble poodles—the whole new and lustrous—in semblance stone, in substance stucco—cracks in the stucco denoting "settlements." But the house being let for ninety-nine years—relet again on a running lease of seven, fourteen, and twenty-one—the builder is not answerable for duration, nor the original lessee for repairs. Take it altogether, than Alhambra Villa masonry could devise no better type of modern taste and metropolitan speculation.

Mr. Poole, since we saw him between four and five years ago, has entered the matrimonial state. He has married a lady of some money, and become a reformed man. He has eschewed the turf, relinquished belcher neckcloths and Newmarket coats—dropped his old-bachelor acquaintances. When a man marries and reforms, especially when marriage and reform are accompanied with increased income, and settled respectably in Alhambra Villa—relations before estranged, tender kindly overtures: the world, before austere, becomes indulgent. It was so with Poole—no longer Dolly.

Grant that in earlier life he had fallen into bad ways, and, among equivocal associates, had been led on by that taste for sporting which is a manly though a perilous characteristic of the true-born Englishman; he who loves horses is liable to come in contact with blacklegs; the racer is a noble animal; but it is his misfortune that the better his breeding the worse his company:—Grant that in the stables, Adolphus Samuel Poole had picked up some wild oats—he had sown them now. Bygones were bygones. He had made a very prudent marriage. Mrs. Poole was a sensible woman—had rendered him domestic, and would keep him straight ! His uncle Samuel, a most worthy man, had found him that sensible woman, and, having found her, had paid his nephew's debts, and adding a round sum to the lady's fortune, had seen that the whole was so tightly settled on wife and children, that Poole had the tender satisfaction of knowing that, happen what might to himself, those dear ones were safe; nay, that if, in the reverses of fortune, he should be compelled by persecuting creditors to fly his native shores, law could not impair the competence it had settled upon Mrs. Poole, nor destroy her blessed privilege to share that competence with a beloved spouse. Insolvency itself, thus protected by a marriage settlement, realizes the sublime security of VIRTUE immortalized by the Roman Muse:—

——"Repulsæ nescia sordidæ,
Intaminatis fulget honoribus;
Nec sumit aut ponit secures
Arbitrio popularis auræ."

Mr. Poole was an active man in the parish vestry—he was a sound politician—he subscribed to public charities—he attended public dinners—he had votes in half a dozen public institutions—he talked of the public interests, and called himself a public man. He chose his associates amongst gentle-

men in business—speculative, it is true, but steady. A joint-stock company was set up; he obtained an official station at its board, coupled with a salary—not large, indeed, but still a salary.

"The money," said Adolphus Samuel Poole, "is not my object; but I like to have something to do." I cannot say how he did something, but no doubt somebody was done.

Mr. Poole was in his parlor, reading letters and sorting papers, before he departed to his office in the West End. Mrs. Poole entered, leading an infant who had not yet learned to walk alone, and denoting, by an interesting enlargement of shape, a kindly design to bless that infant, at no distant period, with a brother or sister, as the case might be.

"Come and kiss Pa, Johnny," said she to the infant.

"Mrs. Poole, I am busy," growled Pa.

"Pa's busy—working hard for little Johnny. Johnny will be the better for it some day," said Mrs. Poole, tossing the infant half up to the ceiling, in compensation for the loss of the paternal kiss.

"Mrs. Poole, what do you want?"

"May I hire Jones's brougham for two hours two-day, to pay visits? There are a great many cards we ought to leave; is there any place where I should leave a card for you, lovey—any person of consequence you were introduced to at Mrs. Haughton's last night? That great man they were all talking about, to whom you seemed to take such a fancy, Samuel, duck—"

"Do get out! that man insulted me, I tell you."

"Insulted you! No; you never told me."

"I did tell you last night coming home."

"Dear me, I thought you meant that Mr. Hartopp."

"Well, *he* almost insulted me, too. Mrs. Poole, you are stupid and disagreeable. Is that all you have to say?"

"Pa's cross, Jonny dear! poor Pa!—people have vexed Pa, Johnny—naughty people. We must go or we shall vex him too."

Such heavenly sweetness on the part of a forbearing wife would have softened Tamburlane. Poole's sullen brow relaxed. If women knew how to treat men, not a husband, unhenpecked, would be found from Indos to the Pole. And Poole, for all his surly demeanor, was as completely governed by that angel as a bear by his keeper.

"Well, Mrs. Poole, excuse me. I own I am out of sorts to-day—give me little Johnny—there (kissing the infant, who in return makes a dig at Pa's left eye, and begins to cry on finding that he has not succeeded in digging it out)—take the broughman. Hush, Johnny—hush—and you may leave a card for me at Mr. Peckham's, Harley Street. My eye smarts horribly; that baby will gouge me one of these days."

Mrs. Poole had succeeded in stilling the infant, and confessing that Johnny's fingers are extremely strong for his age—but, adding that babies will catch at whatever is very bright and beautiful, such as gold and jewels and Mr. Poole's eyes, administers to the wounded orb so soothing a lotion of pity and admiration that Poole growls out quiet mildly—"Nonsense, blarney—by the by, I did not say this morning that you should not have the rosewood chiffoniere?"

"No, you said you could not afford it, duck; and when Pa says he can't afford it, Pa must be the judge—must not he, Johnny dear?"

"But perhaps I can afford it. Yes, you may have it—yes, I say, you *shall* have it. Don't forget to leave that card on Peckham—he's a moneyed man. There's a ring at the bell. Who is it? run and see."

Mrs Poole obeyed with great activity, considering her interesting condition. She came back in half a minute.

"Oh, my Adolphus! oh, my Samuel! it is that dreadful-looking man who was here the other evening—stayed with you so long. I don't like his looks at all. Pray don't be at home."

"I must," said Poole, turning a shade paler, if that were possible. "Stop don't let that girl go to the door; and you—leave me." He snatched his hat and gloves, and putting aside the parlor-maid, who had emerged from the shades below in order to answer the "ring," walked hastily down the small garden.

Jasper Losely was stationed at the little gate. Jasper was no longer in rags, but he was coarsely clad—clad as if he had resigned all pretence to please a lady's eye, or to impose upon a West-End tradesman—a check shirt—a rough pea-jacket, his hands buried in its pockets.

Poole started with well simulated surprise. "What, you! I am just going to my office—in a great hurry at present."

"Hurry or not, I must and will speak to you," said Jasper doggedly.

"What now? then, step in;—only remember I can't give you more than five minutes."

The rude visitor followed Poole into the back parlor, and closed the door after him.

Leaning his arms over a chair, his hat still on his head, Losely fixed his fierce eyes on his old friend, and said in a low, set, determined voice,—"Now, mark me, Dolly Poole, if you think to shirk my business, or throw me over, you'll find yourself in Queer Street. Have you called on Guy Darrell, and put my case to him, or have you not?"

"I met Mr. Darrell only last night, at a very genteel party." (Poole deemed it prudent not to say by whom that genteel party was given, for it will be remembered that Poole had been Jasper's confidant in that adventurer's former designs upon Mrs. Haughton; and if Jasper knew that Poole had made her acquaintance, might he not insist upon Poole's reintroducing him as a visiting acquaintance?) "A very genteel party," repeated Poole. "I made a point of being presented to Mr. Darrell, and very polite he was at first."

"Curse his politeness—get to the point."

"I sounded my way very carefully, as you may suppose; and when I had got him into friendly chat, you understand, I began: Ah! my poor Losely, nothing to be done *there*—he flew off in a tangent—as much as desired me to mind my own business, and hold my tongue; and upon my life, I don't think there is a chance for you in that quarter."

"Very well—we shall see. Next, have you taken any steps to find out the girl, my daughter?"

"I have, I assure you. But you give me so slight a clue. Are you quite sure she is not in America after all?"

"I have told you before that that story about America was all bosh! a stratagem of the old gentleman's to deceive me. Poor old man," continued Jasper, in a tone that positively betrayed feeling—"I don't wonder that he dreads and flies me; yet I would not hurt him more than I have done, even to be as well off as you are—blinking at me from your mahogany perch like a pet owl with its crop full of mice. And if I would take the girl from him, it is for her own good. For if Darrell could be got to make a provision on her, and through her, on myself, why, of course the old man should share the benefit of it.

And now that these infernal pains often keep me awake half the night, I can't always shut out the idea of that old man wandering about the world, and dying in a ditch. And that runaway girl—to whom, I dare swear, he would give away his last crumb of bread—ought to be an annuity to us both: Basta, basta! As to the American story—I had a friend at Paris, who went to America on a speculation; I asked him to inquire about this William Waife and his granddaughter Sophy, who were said to have sailed for New York nearly five years ago, and he saw the very persons—settled in New York—no longer under the name of Waife, but there true name of Simpson, and got out from the man that they had been induced to take their passage from England in the name of Waife, at the request of a person whom the man would not give up, but to whom he said he was under obligations. Perhaps the old gentleman had done the fellow a kind turn in early life. The description of this *soi-disant* Waife and his grandchild settles the matter—wholly unlike those I seek; so that there is every reason to suppose they must still be in England, and it is your business to find them. Continue your search—quicken your wits—let me be better pleased with your success when I call again this day week—and meanwhile four pounds, if you please—as much more as you like."

"Why, I gave you four pounds the other day, besides six pounds for clothes; it can't be gone."

"Every penny."

"Dear, dear! can't you maintain yourself anyhow? Can't you get any one to play at cards? Four pounds! Why, with your talent for whist, four pounds are a capital!"

"Whom can I play with? Whom can I herd with?—Cracksmen and pickpockets. Fit me out; ask me to your own house; invite your own friends; make up a rubber, and you will then see what I can do with four pounds; and may go shares if you like, as we used to do."

"Don't talk so loud. Losely, you know

very well that what you ask is impossible. I've turned over a new leaf."

"But I've still got your hand-writing on the old leaf."

"What's the good of these stupid threats? If you really wanted to do me a mischief, where could you go to, and who'd believe you?"

"I fancy your wife would. I'll try. Hillo—"

"Stop—stop—stop. No row here, sir. No scandal. Hold your tongue, or I'll send for the police."

"Do! Nothing I should like better. I'm tired out. I want to tell my own story at the Old Bailey, and have my revenge upon you, upon Darrell, upon all. Send for the police."

Losely threw himself at length on the sofa—(new morocco, with spring cushions)—and folded his arms.

"You could only give me five minutes—they are gone, I fear. I am more liberal. I give your you own time to consider. I don't care if I stay to dine; I daresay Mrs. Poole will excuse my dress."

"Losely, you are such a—fellow! If I do give you the four pounds you ask, will you promise to shift for yourself somehow, and molest me no more?"

"Certainly not. I shall come once every week for the same sum. I can't live upon less—until—"

"Until what?"

"Until either you get Mr. Darrell to sell on me a suitable provision; or until you place me in possession of my daughter, and I can then be in a better condition to treat with him myself; for if I would make a claim on account of the girl, I must produce the girl, or he may say she is dead. Besides, if she be as pretty as she was when a child, the very sight of her might move him more than all my talk."

"And if I succeed in doing anything with Mr. Darrell, or discovering your daughter, you will give up all such letters and documents of mine as you say you possess?"

"'Say I possess!' I have shown them to you in this pocket-book. Dolly Poole—your own proposition to rob old Latham's safe."

Poole eyed the book, which the ruffian took out and tapped. Had the ruffian been a slighter man, Poole would have been a braver one. As it was—he eyed and groaned. "Turn against one's own crony! So unhandsome, so unlike what I thought you were."

"It is you who would turn against me. But stick to Darrell, or find me my daughter, and help her and me to get justice out of him; and you shall not only have back these letters, but I'll pay you handsomely—handsomely, Dolly Poole. Zooks, sir—I am fallen—but I am always a gentleman."

Therewith Losely gave a vehement slap to his hat, which, crushed by the stroke, improved his general appearance into an aspect so outrageously raffish, that but for the expression of his countenance the contrast between the boast and the man would have been ludicrous even to Mr. Poole. The countenance was too dark to permit laughter. In the dress, but the ruin of fortune—in the face, the ruin of man.

Poole heaved a deep sigh, and extended four sovereigns. Losely rose and took them carelessly. "This day week," he said—shook himself—and went his way.

CHAPTER VI.

Fresh touches to the Three Vignettes for the Book of Beauty.

WEEKS passed—the London season was beginning—Darrell had decided nothing—the prestige of his position was undiminished,—in politics, perhaps, higher. He had succeeded in reconciling some great men; he had strengthened—it might be saved, a jarring cabinet. In all this he had shown admirable knowledge of mankind, and proved that time and disuse had not lessened his powers of perception. In his matrimonial designs, Darrelll seemed more bent than ever upon the hazard—irresolute as ever on the choice of a partner. Still the choice appeared to be circumscribed to the fair three who had been subjected to Colonel Morley's speculative criticism—Lady Adela, Miss Vipont, Flora Vyvyan. Much *pro* and *con* might be said in respect to each. Lady Adela was so handsome that it was a pleasure o look at her; and that is much when one sees the handsome face every day,—provided the pleasure does not wear off. She had the reputation of a very good temper; and the expression of her countenance confirmed it. There, panegyric stopped; but detraction did not commence. What remained was inoffensive

commonplace. She had no salient attribute, and no ruling passion.

Certainly she would never have wasted a thought on Mr. Darrell, nor have discovered a single merit in him, if he had not been quoted as a very rich man of high character in search of a wife, and if her father had not said to her —"Adela, Mr. Darrell has been greatly struck with your appearance—he told me so. He is not young, but he is still a very fine-looking man, and your are twenty-seven. 'Tis a greater distinction to be noticed by a person of his years and position, than by a pack of silly young fellows, who think more of their own pretty faces than they would ever do of yours. If you did not mind a little disparity of years, he would make you a happy wife; and, in the course of nature, a widow, not too old to enjoy liberty, and with a jointure that might entitle you to a still better match."

Darrell thus put into Lady Adela's head, he remained there, and became an *idée fixe*. Viewed in the light of a probable husband, he was elevated into an "interesting man." She would have received his addresses with gentle complacency; and being more the creature of habit than impulse, would, no doubt, in the intimacy of connubial life, have blest him, or any other admiring husband, with a reasonable modicum of languid affection. Nevertheless, Lady Adela was an unconscious impostor; for, owing to a mild softness of love and a susceptibility to blushes, a victim ensnared by her beauty would be apt to give her credit for a nature far more accessible to the romance of the tender passion, than, happily perhaps for her own peace of mind, she possessed; and might flatter himself that he had produced a sensation which gave that softness to the eye, and that damask to the blush.

Honoria Vipont would have been a choice far more creditable to the good sense of so mature a wooer. Few better specimens of a young lady brought up to become an accomplished woman of the world. She had sufficient instruction to be the companion of an ambitious man—solid judgment to fit her for his occasional adviser. She could preside with dignity over a stately household—receive with grace distinguished guests. Fitted to administer an ample fortune, ample fortune was necessary to the development of her excellent qualities. If a man of Darrell's age were bold enough to marry a young wife, a safer wife amongst the young ladies of London he could scarcely find; for though Honoria was only three-and-twenty, she was as staid, as sensible, and as remote from all girlish frivolities, as if she had been eight-and-thirty. Certainly had Guy Darrell been of her own years, his fortune unmade, his fame to win, a lawyer residing at the back of Holborn, or a petty squire in the petty demesnes of Fawley, he would have had no charm in the eyes of Honoria Vipont. Disparity of years was in this case not his drawback but his advantage, since to that disparity Darrell owed the established name and the eminent station which made Honoria think she elevated her own self in preferring him. It is but justice to her to distinguish here between a woman's veneration for the attributes of respect which a man gathers round him, and the more vulgar sentiment which sinks the man altogether, except as the necessary fixture to be taken in with the general valuation.

It is not fair to ask if a girl who entertains a preference for one of our toiling, stirring, ambitious sex, who may be double her age or have a snub nose, but who looks dignified and imposing on a pedestal of state, whether she would like him as much if stripped of all his accessories, and left unredeemed to his baptismal register or unbecoming nose. Just as well ask a girl in love with a young Lothario if she would like him as much if he had been ugly and crooked. The high name of the one man is as much a part of him as good looks are to the other. Thus, though it was said of Madame de la Vallière that she loved Louis XIV. for himself and not for his regal grandeur, is there a women in the world, however disinterested, who believes that Madame de la Vallière would have liked Louis XIV. as much if Louis XIV. had been Mr. John Jones? Honoria would not have bestowed her hand on a brainless, worthless nobleman, whatever his rank or wealth. She was above that sort of ambition; but neither would she have married the best-looking and worthiest John Jones who ever bore that British appellation, if he had not occupied the social position which brought the merits of a Jones within range of the eyeglass of a Vipont.

Many girls in the nursery say to their juvenile confidants, "I will only marry the

man I love." Honoria had ever said, "I will only marry the man I respect." Thus it was her respect for Guy Darrell that made her honor him by her preferenee. She appreciated his intellect—she fell in love with the reputation which the intellect had acquired. And Darrel might certainly choose worse. His cool reason inclined him much to Honoria. When Alban Morley argued in her favor, he had no escape from acquiescence, except in the turns and doubles of his ironical humor. But his heart was a rebel to his reason; and between you and me, Honoria was exactly one of those young women by whom a man of grave years ought to be attracted, and by whom, somehow or other, he never is;—I suspect, because the older we grow the more we love youthfulness of character. When Alcides, having gone through all the fatigues of life, took a bride in Olympus, he ought to have selected Minerva, but he chose Hebe.

Will Darrell find his Hebe in Flora Vyvyan? Alban Morley became more and more alarmed by that apprehension. He was shrewd enough to recognize in her the girl of all others formed to glad the eye and plague the heart of a grave and reverend seigneur. And it might well not only flatter the vanity, but beguile the judgment, of a man who feared his hand would be accepted only for the sake of his money, that Flora just at this moment refused the greatest match in the kingdom, young Lord Vipont, son of the new Earl of Montfort, a young man of good sense, high character, well-looking as men go—heir to estates almost royal;—a young man whom no girl on earth is justified in refusing. But would the whimsical creature accept Darrell! Was she not merely making sport of him, and if, caught by her arts, he, sage and elder, solemnly offered homage and hand to that *belle dedaigneuse* who had just doomed to despair a comely young magnate with five times his fortune, would she not hasten to make him the ridicule of London.

Darrell had perhaps his secret reasons for thinking otherwise, but he did not confide them even to Alban Morley. This much only will the narrator, more candid, say to the reader,—If out of the three whom his thoughts fluttered round, Guy Darrell wished to select the one who would love him best—love him with the whole fresh unreasoning heart of a girl whose childish frowardness sprang from childlike innocence, let him dare the hazard of refusal and of ridicule; let him say to Flora Vyvyan, in the pathos of his sweet deep voice, "Come, and be the spoiled darling of my gladdened age; let my life, ere it sink into night, be rejoiced by the bloom and fresh breeze of the morning."

But to say it he must wish it; he himself must love—love with all the lavish indulgence, all the knightly tenderness, all the grateful sympathizing joy in the youth of the beloved, when youth for the lover is no more, which alone can realize what we sometimes see, though loath to own it—congenial unions with unequal years. If Darrell feel not that love, woe to him, woe and thrice shame if he allure to his hearth one who might indeed be a Hebe to the spouse who gave up to her his whole heart in return for hers; but to the spouse who had no heart to give, or gave but the chips of it, the Hebe indignant would be worse than Erinnys!

All things considered, then, they who wish well to Guy Darrell must range with Alban Morley in favor of Miss Honoria Vipont. She, proffering affectionate respect — Darrell responding by rational esteem. So, perhaps, Darrell himself thought, for whenever Miss Vipont was named, he became more taciturn, more absorbed in reflection, and sighed heavily, like a man who slowly makes up his mind to a decision, wise, but not tempting.

CHAPTER VII.

Containing much of that information which the wisest men in the world could not give, but which the Author can.

"DARRELL," said Colonel Morley, "you remember my nephew George as a boy? He is now the rector of Humberston; married—a very nice sort of woman—suits him. Humberston is a fine living; but his talents are wasted there. He preached for the first time in London last year, and made a considerable sensation. This year he has been much out of town. He has no church here as yet. I hope to get him one. Carr is determined that he shall be a Bishop. Meanwhile he preaches at——Chapel to-morrow; come and hear him

with me, and then tell me frankly—is he eloquent or not?"

Darrell had a prejudice against fashionable preachers; but to please Colonel Morley he went to hear George. He was agreeably surprised by the pulpit oratory of the young divine. It had that rare combination of impassioned earnestness, with subdued tones, and decorous gesture, which suits the ideal of ecclesiastical eloquence conceived by an educated English Churchman—

"Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full."

Occassionally the old defect in utterance was discernible; there was a gasp as for breath, or a prolonged dwelling upon certain syllables, which, occurring in the most animated passages, and apparently evincing the preacher's struggle with emotion, rather served to heighten the sympathy of the audience. But, for the most part, the original stammer was replaced by a felicitous pause, the pause as of a thoughtful reasoner or a solemn monitor knitting ideas, that came too quick, into method, or chastening impulse into disciplined zeal. The mind of the preacher, thus not only freed from trammel, but armed for victory, came forth with that power which is peculiar to an original intellect—the power which suggests more than it demonstrates. He did not so much preach to his audience, as wind himself through unexpected ways into the hearts of the audience; and they who heard suddenly found their hearts preaching to themselves. He took for his text—"Cast down, but not destroyed;" and out of this text he framed a discourse full of true Gospel tenderness, which seemed to raise up comfort as the saving, against despair as the evil, principle of mortal life. The congregation was what is called "brilliant"—statesmen, and peers, and great authors, and fine ladies—people whom the inconsiderate believe to stand little in need of comfort, and never to be subjected to despair. In many an intent or drooping face in that brilliant congregation might be read a very different tale. But of all present there was no one whom the discourse so moved as a woman, who, chancing to pass that way, had followed the throng into the Chapel, and with difficulty obtained a seat at the far end; a woman who had not been within the walls of a chapel or church for long years—a grim woman, in iron grey. There she sate unnoticed, in her remote corner; and before the preacher had done, her face was hidden behind her clasped hands, and she was weeping such tears as she had not wept since childhood.

On leaving church, Darrell said little more to the Colonel than this—"Your nephew takes me by surprise. The Church wants such men. He will have a grand career, if life be spared to him." Then he sank into a reverie, from which he broke abruptly—"Your nephew was at school with my boy. Had my son lived, what had been *his* career?"

The Colonel, never encouraging painful subjects, made no rejoinder.

"Bring George to see me to-morrow. I shrunk from asking it before: I thought the sight of him would too much revive old sorrows; but I feel I should accustom myself to face every memory. Bring him."

The next day the Colonel took George to Darrell's; but George had been pre-engaged till late at noon, and Darrell was just leaving home, and at his street door, when the uncle and nephew came. They respected his time too much to accept his offer to come in, but walked beside him for a few minutes, as he bestowed upon George those compliments which are sweet to the ears of rising men from the lips of those who have risen.

"I remember you, George, as a boy," said Darrell, "and thanked you then for good advice to a schoolfellow, who is lost to your counsels now." He faltered an instant, but went on firmly, "You had then a slight defect in utterance, which, I understand from your uncle, increased as you grew older; so that I never anticipated for you the fame that you are achieving. *Orator fit*—you must have been admirably taught. In the management of your voice—in the excellence of your delivery, I see that you are one of the few who deem that the Divine Word should not be unworthly uttered. The debater on beer bills may be excused from studying the orator's effects; but all that enforce, dignify, adorn, make the becoming studies of him who strives by eloquence to people heaven; whose task it it is to adjure the thoughtless, animate the languid, soften the callous, humble the proud, alarm the guilty, comfort the sorrowful, call back to the fold the lost. Is the culture to be slovenly where the glebe is so fertile? The

only field left in modern times for the ancient orator's sublime conceptions, but laborious training, is the Preacher's. And I own, George, that I envy the masters who skilled to the Preacher's art an intellect like yours."

"Masters," said the Colonel. "I thought all those elocution masters failed with you, George. You cured and taught yourself. Did not you? No! Why, then, who was your teacher?"

George looked very much embarrassed, and, attempting to answer, began horribly to stutter.

Darrell, conceiving that a preacher whose fame was not yet confirmed, might reasonably dislike to confess those obligations to elaborate study, which, if known, might detract from his effect, or expose him to ridicule, hastened to change the subject. "You have been to the country, I hear, George; at your living I suppose?"

"No. I have not been there very lately; travelling about."

"Have you seen Lady Montfort since your return?" asked the Colonel.

"I only returned on Saturday night. I go to Lady Montfort's at Twickenham, this evening."

"She has a delightful retreat," said the Colonel. "But if she wish to avoid admiration, she should not make the banks of the river her favorite haunt. I know some romantic admirers, who, when she re-appears in the world, may be rival aspirants, and who have much taken to rowing since Lady Montfort has retired to Twickenham. They catch a glimpse of her, and return to boast of it. But they report that there is a young lady seen walking with her—an extremely pretty one—who is she? People ask *me*,—as if I knew everything."

"A companion, I suppose," said George, more and more confused. "But, pardon me, I must leave you now. Good-by, uncle. Good day, Mr. Darrell.

Darrell did not seem to observe George take leave, but walked on, his hat over his brows, lost in one of his frequent fits of abstracted gloom.

"If my nephew were not married," said the Colonel, "I should regard his embarrassment with much suspicion—embarrassed at every point, from his travels about the country to the question of a young lady at Twickenham. I wonder who that young lady can be—not one of the Viponts, or I should have heard. Are there any young ladies on the Lyndsay side?—Eh, Darrell?"

"What do I care?—your head runs on young ladies," answered Darrell, with peevish vivacity, as he stopped abruptly at Carr Vipont's door.

"And your feet do not seem to run from them," said the Colonel; and, with an ironical salute, walked away, while the expanding portals engulfed his friend.

As he sauntered up St. James's Street, nodding towards the thronged windows of its various clubs, the Colonel suddenly encountered Lionel, and, taking the young gentleman's arm, said, "If you are not very much occupied, will you waste half an hour on me? I am going homewards."

Lionel readily assented, and the Colonel continued—"Are you in want of your cabriolet to-day, or can you lend it to me? I have asked a Frenchman, who brings me a letter of introduction, to dine at the nearest *restaurant's* to which one can ask a Frenchman. I need not say that is Greenwich; and if I took him in a cabriolet, he would not suspect that he was taken five miles out of town."

"Alas, my dear Colonel, I have just sold my cabriolet."

"What! old-fashioned already!—True, it has been built three months. Perhaps the horse, too, has become an antique in some other collection—silent—um!—cabriolet and horse both sold?"

"Both," said Lionel, ruefully.

"Nothing surprises me that man can do," said the Colonel; "or I should be surprised. When, acting on Darrell's general instructions for your outfit, I bought that horse, I flattered myself that I had chosen well. But rare are good horses—rarer still a good judge of them; I suppose I was cheated, and the brute proved a screw."

"The finest cab-horse in London, my dear Colonel, and every one knows how proud I was of him. But I wanted money, and had nothing else that would bring the sum I required. Oh, Colonel Morley, do hear me!"

"Certainly, I am not deaf, nor is St. James's Street. When a man says, 'I have parted with my horse because I wanted money,' I advise him to say it in a whisper."

"I have been imprudent, at least unlucky,

and I must pay the penalty. A friend of mine—that is, not exactly a friend, but an acquaintance—whom I see every day—one of my own set—asked me to sign my name at Paris to a bill at three months' date, as his security. He gave me his honor that I should hear no more of it—he would be sure to take up the bill when due—a man whom I supposed to be as well off as myself! You will allow that I could scarcely refuse—at all events, I did not. The bill came due two days ago; my friend does not pay it, and indeed says he cannot, and the holder of the bill calls on me. He was very civil—offered to renew it—pressed me to take my time, etc.; but I did not like his manner: and as to my friend, I find that, instead of being well off, as I supposed, he is hard up, and that I am not the first he has got into the same scrape—not intending it, I am sure. He's really a very good fellow, and if I wanted security, would be it to-morrow to any amount."

"I've no doubt of it—to any amount!" said the Colonel.

"So I thought it best to conclude the matter at once. I had saved nothing from my allowance, munificent as it is. I could not have the face to ask Mr. Darrell to remunerate me for my own imprudence. I should not like to borrow from my mother—I know it would be inconvenient to her. I sold both horse and cabriolet this morning. I had just been getting the cheque cashed when I met you. I intend to take the money myself to the bill-holder. I have just the sum—£200."

"The horse alone was worth that," said the Colonel, with a faint sigh—"not to be replaced. France and Russia have the pick of our stables. However, if it is sold, it is sold—talk no more of it. I hate painful subjects. You did right not to renew the bill—it is opening an account with Ruin; and though I avoid preaching on money matters, or, indeed, any other (preaching is my nephew's vocation, not mine), yet allow me to extract from you a solemn promise never again to sign bills, nor to draw them. Be to your friend what you please except security for him. Orestes never asked Pylades to help him to borrow at fifty per cent. Promise me—your word of honor as a gentleman! Do you hesitate?"

"My dear Colonel," said Lionel frankly, "I do hesitate. I might promise not to sign a money-lender's bill on own my account, though really I think you take rather an exaggerated view of what is, after all, a common occurrence—"

"Do I?" said the Colonel, meekly. "I'm sorry to hear it. I detest exaggeration. Go on. You might promise not to ruin yourself—but you object to promise not to help in the ruin of your friend."

"That is exquisite irony, Colonel," said Lionel, piqued; "but it does not deal with the difficulty, which is simply this: When a man whom you call friend—whom you walk with, ride with, dine with almost every day, says to you, 'I am in immediate want of a few hundreds—I don't ask you to lend them to me, perhaps you can't—but assist me to borrow—trust to my honor, that the debt shall not fall on you,' why, then, it seems as if to refuse the favor was to tell the man you call friend that you doubt his honor; and though I have been caught once in that way, I feel that I must be caught very often before I should have the moral courage to say 'No!' Don't ask me, then, to promise—be satisfied with my assurance that, in future at least, I will be more cautious, and if the loss fall on me, why, the worst that can happen is to do again what I do now."

"Nay, you would not perhaps have another horse and cab to sell. In that case, you would do the reverse of what you do now—you would renew the bill—the debt would run on like a snowball—in a year or two you would owe, not hundreds, but thousands. But come in—here we are at my door."

The Colonel entered his drawing-room. A miracle of exquisite neatness the room was—rather effeminate, perhaps, in its attributes; but that was no sign of the Colonel's tastes, but of his popularity with the ladies. All those pretty things were their gifts. The tapestry on the chairs their work—the *sèvre* on the consoles—the clock on the mantel-shelf—the ink-stand, paper-cutter, taper-stand on the writing-table—their birthday presents. Even the white woolly Maltese dog that sprang from the rug to welcome him—even the flowers in the *jardinier*—even the tasteful cottage-piano, and the very music-stand beside it—and the card-trays, piled high with invitations,—were contributions from the forgiving sex to the unrequiting bachelor.

Surveying his apartment with a complacent air, the Colonel sank into his easy *fauteuil*, and drawing off his gloves leisurely, said—

"No man has more friends than I have—never did I lose one—never did I sign a bill. Your father pursued a different policy—he signed many bills—and lost many friends."

Lionel, much distressed, looked down, and evidently desired to have done with the subject. Not so the Colonel. That shrewd man, though he did not preach, had a way all his own, which was perhaps quite as effective as any sermon by a fashionable layman can be to an impatient youth."

"Yes," resumed the Colonel, "it is the old story. One always begins by being security to a friend. The discredit of the thing is familiarized to one's mind by the false show of generous confidence in another. Then what you have done for a friend, a friend should do for you—a hundred or two would be useful now—you are sure to repay it in three months. To Youth the Future seems safe as the Bank of England, and distant as the peaks of Himalaya. You pledge your honor that in three months you will release your friend. The three months expire. To release the one friend, you catch hold of another—the bill is renewed, premium and interest thrown into the next pay-day—soon the account multiplies, and with it the honor dwindles—your NAME circulates from hand to hand on the back of doubtful paper—your name, which, in all money transactions, should grow higher and higher each year you live, falling down every month like the shares in a swindling speculation. You begin by what you call trusting a friend, that is, aiding him to self-destruction—buying him arsenic to clear his complexion,—you end by dragging all near you into your own abyss, as a drowning man would clutch at his own brother. Lionel Haughton, the saddest expression I ever saw in your father's face was when—when—but you shall hear the story."

"No, sir; spare me. Since you so insist on it, I will give the promise—it is enough; and my father—"

"Was as honorable as you when he first signed his name to a friend's bill; and perhaps, promised to do so no more as reluctantly as you do. You had better let me say on; if I stop now, you will forget all about it by this day twelvemonth; if I go on, you will never forget. There are other examples besides your father; I am about to name one."

Lionel resigned himself to the operation, throwing his handkerchief over his face as if he had taken chloroform.

"When I was young," resumed the Colonel, "I chanced to make acquaintance with a man of infinite whim and humor; fascinating as Darrell himself, though in a very different way. We called him Willy—you know the kind of man one calls by his Christian name, cordially abbreviated—that kind of man seems never to be quite grown up; and, therefore, never rises in life. I never knew a man called Willy after the age of thirty, who did not come to a melancholy end! Willy was the natural son of a rich, helter-skelter, cleverish, maddish, stylish, raffish, four-in-hand Baronet, by a celebrated French actress. The title is extinct now, and so, I believe, is that genus of stylish, raffish, four-in-hand Baronet—Sir Julian Losely—"

"Losely!" echoed Lionel.

"Yes; do you know the name?"

"I never heard it till yesterday. I want to tell you what I did hear then—but after your story—go on."

"Sir Julian Losely (Willy's father) lived with the French lady as his wife, and reared Willy in his house, with as much pride and fondness as if he intended him for his heir. The poor boy, I suspect, got but little regular education; though, of course, he spoke his French mother's tongue like a native; and, thanks also perhaps to his mother, he had an extraordinary talent for mimicry and acting. His father was passionately fond of private theatricals, and Willy had early practice in that line. I once saw him act Falstaff in a country house, and I doubt if Quin could have acted it better. Well, when Willy was still a mere boy, he lost his mother, the actress. Sir Julian married—had a legitimate daughter—died intestate—and the daughter, of course, had the personal property, which was not much; the heir-at-law got the land, and poor Willy nothing. But Willy was an universal favorite with his father's old friends—wild fellows like Sir Julian himself: amongst them there were two cousins, with large country-houses, sporting men, and bachelors. They shared Willy between them, and quarrelled which should have the most of him. So he grew up to be man,

with no settled provision, but always welcome, not only to the two cousins, but at every house in which, like Milton's lark, 'he came to startle the dull night'—the most amusing companion! —a famous shot—a capital horseman—knew the ways of all animals, fishes, and birds; I verily believe he could have coaxed a pug-dog to point, and an owl to sing. Void of all malice, up to all fun. Imagine how much people would court, and how little they would do for, a Willy of that sort. Do I bore you?"

"On the contrary, I am greatly interested."

"One thing a Willy, if a Willy could be wise, ought to do for himself—keep single. A wedded Willy is in a false position. My Willy wedded—for love too—an amiable girl, I believe—(I never saw her; it was long afterwards that I knew Willy)—but as poor as himself. The friends and relatives then said—'This is serious: something *must* be done for Willy.' It was easy to say, 'something must be done,' and monstrous difficult to do it. While the relations were consulting, his half-sister, the Baronet's lawful daughter, died, unmarried; and though she had ignored him in life, left him £2,000. 'I have hit it now,' cried one of the cousins; 'Willy is fond of a country life. I will let him have a farm on a nominal rent, his £2,000 will stock it; and his farm, which is surrounded by woods, will be a capital hunting-meet. As long as I live, Willy shall be mounted.'

"Willy took the farm, and astonished his friends by attending to it. It was just beginning to answer when his wife died, leaving him only one child—a boy; and her death made him so melancholy that he could no longer attend to his farm. He threw it up, invested the proceeds as a capital, and lived on the interest as a gentleman at large. He travelled over Europe for some time—chiefly on foot—came back, having recovered his spirits—resumed his old desultory purposeless life at different country-houses, and at one of those houses I and Charles Haughton met him. Here I pause, to state that Will Losely at that time impressed me with the idea that he was a thoroughly honest man. Though he was certainly no formalist —though he had lived with wild sets of convivial scapegraces—though, out of sheer high spirits, he would now and then make conventional Proprieties laugh at their own long faces; yet, I should have said that Bayard himself—and Bayard was no saint—could not have been more incapable of a disloyal, rascally, shabby action. Nay, in the plain matter of integrity, his ideas might be called refined, almost Quixotic. If asked to give or to lend, Willy's hand was in his pocket in an instant; but though thrown among rich men—careless as himself—Willy never put his hand into their pockets, never borrowed, never owed. He would accept hospitality—make frank use of your table, your horses, your dogs—but your money, no! He repaid all he took from a host by rendering himself the pleasantest guest that host ever entertained.

"Poor Willy! I think I see his quaint smile brimming over with sly sport! The sound of his voice was like a cry of 'half-holiday' in a schoolroom. He dishonest! I should as soon have suspected the noonday sun of being a dark lantern! I remember, when he and I were walking home from wild-duck shooting in advance of our companions, a short conversation between us that touched me greatly, for it showed that, under all his levity, there were sound sense and right feeling. I asked him about his son, then a boy at school—'Why, as it was the Christmas vacation, he had refused our host's suggestion to let the lad come down there?' 'Ah,' said he, 'don't fancy that I will lead my son to grow up a scatterbrained good-for-nought like his father. His society is the joy of my life; whenever I have enough in my pockets to afford myself that joy, I go and hire a quiet lodging close by his school, to have him with me from Saturday till Monday all to myself—where he never hears wild fellows call me "Willy," and ask me to mimic. I had hoped to have spent this vacation with him in that way, but his school bill was higher than usual, and after paying it, I had not a guinea to spare —obliged to come here where they lodge and feed me for nothing; the boy's uncle on the mother's side—respectable man in business—kindly takes him home for the holidays; but did not ask me, because his wife—and I don't blame her—thinks I'm too wild for a City clerk's sober household.'

"I asked Will Losely what he meant to do with his son, and hinted that I might get the boy a commission in the army without purchase."

"'No,' said Willy, 'I know what it is to set up for a gentleman on the capital of a beggar. It is to be a shuttlecock between discontent and temptation. I would not have my lost wife's son waste his life as I have done. He would be more spoiled, too, than I have been. The handsomest boy you ever saw—and bold as a lion. Once in that set' (pointing over his shoulders towards some of our sporting comrades, whose loud laughter every now and then reached our ears)—'once in that set, he would never be out of it—fit for nothing. I swore to his mother on her death-bed that I would bring him up to avoid my errors—that he should be no hanger-on and led-Captain! Swore to her that he should be reared according to his real station—the station of his mother's kin—(*I* have no station)—and if I can but see him an honest British trader — respectable, upright, equal to the highest—because no rich man's dependant, and no poor man's jest—my ambition will be satisfied. And now you understand, sir, why my boy is not here.' You would say a father who spoke thus had a man's honest stuff in him. Eh, Lionel!"

"Yes, and a true gentleman's heart, too!"

"So I thought; yet I fancied I knew the world! After that conversation, I quitted our host's roof, and only one or twice afterwards, at country-houses, met William Losely again. To say truth, his chief patrons and friends were not exactly in my set. But your father continued to see Willy pretty often. They took a great fancy to each other. Charlie, you know, was jovial—fond of private theatricals too; in short, they became great allies. Some years after, as ill-luck would have it, Charles Haughton, while selling off his Middlesex property, was in immediate want of £1,200. He could get it on a bill, but not without security. His bills were already rather down in the market, and he had already exhausted most of the friends whose security was esteemed by accommodators any better than his own. In an evil hour he had learned that Poor Willy had just £1,500 out upon mortgage; and the money-lender, who was lawyer for the property on which the mortgage was, knew it, too. It was on the interest of this £1,500 that Willy lived, having spent the rest of his little capital in settling his son as a clerk in a first-rate commercial house.

"Charles Haughton went down to shoot at the house where Willy was a guest—shot with him — drank with him — talked with him—proved to him, no doubt, that long before the three months were over the Middlesex property would be sold; the bill taken up, Willy might trust to his honor. Willy did trust. Like you, my dear Lionel, he had not the moral courage to say 'No.' Your father, I am certain, meant to repay him; your father never in cold blood meant to defraud any human being; but—your father gambled! A debt of honor at *piquet* preceded the claim of a bill-discounter. The £1,200 were forestalled — your father was penniless. The money-lender came upon Willy. Sure that Charles Haughton would yet redeem his promise, Willy renewed the bill another three months on usurious terms; those months over, he came to town to find your father hiding between four walls, unable to stir out for fear of arrest. Willy had no option but to pay the money; and when your father knew that it was so paid, and that the usury had swallowed up the whole of Willy's little capital, then, I say, I saw upon Charles Haughton's once radiant face the saddest expression I ever saw on mortal man's. And sure I am that all the joys your father ever knew as a man of pleasure were not worth the agony and remorse of that moment. I respect your emotion, Lionel, but you begin as your father began; and if I had not told you this story, you might have ended as your father ended."

Lionel's face remained covered, and it was only by choking gasps that he interrupted the Colonels narrative. "Certainly," resumed Alban Morley in a reflective tone—"Certainly that villain—I mean William Losely, for villain he afterwards proved to be—had the sweetest, most forgiving temper! He might have gone about to his kinsmen and friends denouncing Charles Haughton, and saying by what solemn promises he had been undone. But no! such a story just at that moment would have crushed Charles Haughton's last chance of ever holding up his head again, and Charles told me (for it was through Charles that I knew the tale) that Willy's parting words to him were, 'Do not fret, Charlie—after all, my boy is now settled in life, and I am a cat with nine lives, and should fall on my legs if thrown out of a garret window. Don't feet.' So he kept the secret, and told the money-lender to

hold his tongue. Poor Willy! I never asked a rich friend to lend me money but once in my life. It was then. I went to Guy Darrell, who was in full practice, and said to him, 'Lend me one thousand pounds. I may never repay you,' 'Five thousand pounds if you like it,' said he. 'One will do.' I took the money, and sent it to Willy. Alas! he returned it, writing word that 'Providence had been very kind to him; he had just been appointed to a capital place, with a magnificent salary.' The cat had fallen on his legs. He bade me comfort Haughton with that news. The money went back into Darrell's pocket, and perhaps wandered thence to Charles Haughton's creditors. Now for the appointment.

"At the country-house to which Willy had returned destitute, he had met a stranger (no relation), who said to him, 'You live with these people—shoot their game—break in their horses—see to their farms—and they give you nothing! You are no longer very young—you should lay by your little income, and add to it. Live with me and I will give you £300 a-year. I am parting with my steward—take his place, but be my friend.' William Losely of course closed with the proposition. This gentleman, whose name was Gunston, I had known slightly in former times—(people say I know everybody)—a soured, bilious, melancholy, indolent, misanthropical old bachelor. With a splendid place universally admired, and a large estate universally envied, he lived much alone, ruminating on the bitterness of life and the nothingness of worldly blessings. Meeting Willy at the country-house to which, by some predestined relaxation of misanthropy, he had been decoyed—for the first time for years Mr. Gunston was heard to laugh. He said to himself, 'Here is a man who actually amuses me.' William Losely contrived to give the misanthrope a new zest of existence; and when he found that business could be made pleasant, the rich man conceived an interest in his own house, gardens, property. For the sake of William's merry companionship, he would even ride over his farms, and actually carried a gun. Meanwhile, the property, I am told was really well managed. Ah! that fellow Willy was a born genius, and could have managed everybody's affairs except his own. I heard of all this with pleasure—(people say I hear everything)—when one day a sporting man seizes me by the button at Tattersall's—'Do you know the news? Will Losely is in prison on a charge of robbing his employer.'"

"Robbing! incredible!" exclaimed Lionel.

"My dear Lionel, it was after hearing that news that I established as invariable my grand maxim, *Nil admirari*—never to be astonished at anything!"

"But of course he was innocent?"

"On the contrary, he confessed, was committed; pleaded guilty, and was transported! People who knew Willy said that Gunston ought to have declined to drag him before a magistrate, or, at the subsequent trial, have abstained from giving evidence against him; that Willy had been till then a faithful steward; the whole proceeds of the estate had passed through his hands; he might, in transactions for timber, have cheated undetected to twice the amount of the alleged robbery; it must have been a momentary aberration of reason; the rich man should have let him off. But I side with the rich man. His last belief in his species was annihilated. He must have been inexorable. He could never be amused, never be interested again. He *was* inexorable and —vindictive."

"But what were the facts?"—what was the evidence?"

"Very little came out on the trial; because, in pleading guilty, the court had merely to consider the evidence which had sufficed to commit him. The trial was scarcely noticed in the London papers. William Losely was not like a man known about town. His fame was confined to those who resorted to old-fashioned country-houses, chiefly single men, for the sake of sport. But stay. I felt such an interest in the case, that I made an abstract or *precis*, not only of all that appeared, but all that I could learn of its leading circumstances. 'Tis a habit of mine, whenever any of my acquaintances embroil themselves with the Crown—" The Colonel rose, unlocked a small glazed bookcase, selected from the contents a MS. volume, reseated himself, turned the pages, found the place sought, and, reading from it, resumed his narrative.

"One evening Mr. Gunston came to William Losely's private apartment. Losely had two or three rooms appropriated to himself in one side of the house, which was built in a quad-

rangle round a courtyard. When Losely opened his door to Mr. Gunston's knock, it struck Mr. Gunston that his manner seemed confused. After some talk on general subjects, Losely said that he had occasion to go to London next morning for a few days on private business of his own. This annoyed Mr. Gunston. He observed that Losely's absence just then would be inconvenient. He reminded him that a tradesman, who lived at a distance, was coming over the next day to be paid for a vinery he had lately erected, and on the charge for which there was a dispute. Could not Losely at least stay to settle it? Losely replied, 'that he had already, by correspondence, adjusted the dispute, having sugguested deductions which the tradesman had agreed to, and that Mr. Gunston would only have to give a cheque for the balance—viz. £270.' Thereon Mr. Gunston remarked, 'If you were not in the habit of paying my bills for me out of what you receive, you would know that I seldom give cheques. I certainly shall not give one now, for I have the money in the house.' Losely observed, 'that is a bad habit of yours keeping large sums in your own house. You may be robbed.' Gunston answered, 'Safer than lodging large sums in a country bank. Country banks break.

My grandfather lost £1,000 by the failure of a country bank; and my father, therefore, always took his payments in cash, remitting them to London from time to time as he went thither himself. I do the same, and I have never been robbed of a farthing that I know of. Who would rob a great house like this, full of men-servants?' 'That's true,' said Losely; 'so if you are sure you have as much by you, you will pay the bill and have done with it. I shall be back before Sparks the builder comes to be paid for the new barns to the home farm—that will be £600; but I shall be taking money for timber next week. He can be paid out of that.' GUNSTON.—'No, I will pay Sparks, too, out of what I have in my bureau; and the timber-merchant can pay his debt into my London banker's.' LOSELY.—'Do you mean that you have enough for both these bills actually in the house?' GUNSTON.—'Certainly, in the bureau in my study. I don't know how much I've got. It may be £1,500—it may be £1,700. I have not counted; I am such a bad man of business; but I am sure it is more than £1,400.' Losely made some jocular observation to the effect that if Gunston never kept an account of what he had, he could never tell whether he was robbed, and, therefore, never would be robbed; since, according to Othello,

> 'He that is robbed, not wanting what is stolen,
> Let him not know it, and he's not robbed at all.'

After that, Losely became absent in manner, and seemed impatient to get rid of Mr. Gunston, hinting that he had the labor-book to look over, and some orders to write out for the bailiff, and that he should start early the next morning."

Here the Colonel looked up from his MS., and said episodically, "Perhaps you will fancy that these dialogues are invented by me after the fashion of the ancient historians? Not so. I give you the report of what passed, as Gunston repeated it *verbatim;* and I suspect that his memory was pretty accurate. Well (here Alban returned to his MS.), Gunston left Willy, and went into his own study, where he took tea by himself. When his valet brought it in, he told the man that Mr. Losely was going to town early the next morning, and ordered the servant to see himself that coffee was served to Mr. Losely before he went. The servant observed, 'that Mr. Losely had seemed much out of sorts lately, and that it was perhaps some unpleasant affair connected with the gentleman who had come to see him two days before.' Gunston had not heard of such a visit. Losely had not mentioned it. When the servant retired, Gunston, thinking over Loseley's quotation respecting his money, resolved to ascertain what he had in his bureau. He opened it, examined the drawers, and found, stowed away in different places at different times, a larger sum than he had supposed—gold and notes to the amount of £1,975, of which nearly £300 were in sovereigns. He smoothed the notes carefully; and, for want of other occupation, and with a view of showing Losely that he could profit by a hint, he entered the numbers of the notes in his pocket-book, placed them all together in one drawer with the gold, re-locked his bureau, and went shortly afterwards to bed.

"The next day (Losely having gone in the morning) the tradesman came to be paid for the vinery. Gunston went to his bureau, took

out his notes and found £250 were gone. He could hardly believe his senses. Had he made a mistake in counting? No. There was his pocket-book, the missing notes entered duly therein. Then he re-counted the sovereigns; 142 were gone of them—nearly £400 in all thus abstracted. He refused at first to admit suspicion of Losely; but, on interrogating his servants, the valet deposed, that he was disturbed about two o'clock in the morning by the bark of the house-dog, which was let loose of a night within the front courtyard of the house. Not apprehending robbers, but fearing the dog might also disturb his master, he got out of his window (being on the ground-floor) to pacify the animal; that he then saw, in the opposite angle of the building, a light moving along the casement of the passage between Losely's rooms and Mr. Gunston's study. Surprised at this, at such an hour, he approached that part of the building, and saw the light very faintly through the chinks in the shutters of the study. The passage windows had no shutters, being old-fashioned stone mullions. He waited by the wall a few minutes, when the light again reappeared in the passage; and he saw a figure in a cloak, which, being in a peculiar color, he recognized at once as Losely's, pass rapidly along; but before the figure had got half through the passage, the light was extinguished, and the servant could see no more.

"But so positive was he, from his recognition of the cloak, that the man was Losely, that he ceased to feel alarm or surprise, thinking, on reflection, that Losely, sitting up later than usual to transact business before his departure, might have gone into his employer's study for any book or paper which he might have left there. The dog began barking again, and seemed anxious to get out of the courtyard to which he was confined; but the servant gradually appeased him—went to bed, and somewhat overslept himself. When he awoke, he hastened to take the coffee into Losely's room but Losely was gone. Here there was another suspicious circumstance. It had been a question how the bureau had been opened, the key being safe in Gunston's possession, and there being no sign of force. The lock was one of those rude old-fashioned ones which are very easily picked, but to which a modern key does not readily fit. In the passage there was found a long nail crooked at the end; and that nail, the superintendent of the police (who had been summoned) had the wit to apply to the lock of the bureau, and it unlocked and re-locked it easily. It was clear that whoever had so shaped the nail could not have used such an instrument for the first time, and must be a practised picklock. That, one would suppose at first, might exonerate Losely; but he was so clever a fellow at all mechanical contrivances, that, coupled with the place of finding, the nail made greatly against him; and still more so, when some nails precisely similar were found on the chimney-piece of an inner room in his apartment, a room between that in which he had received Gunston and his bed-chamber, and used by him both as study and workshop.

"The nails, indeed, which were very long and narrow, with a Gothic oanamental head, were at once recognized by the carpenter on the estate as having been made according to Losely's directions, for a garden bench to be placed in Gunston's favorite walk, Gunston having remarked, some days before, that he should like a seat there, and Losely having undertaken to make one from a design by Pugin. Still loath to believe in Losely's guilt, Gunston went to London with the police superintendent, the valet, and the neighboring attorney. They had no difficulty in finding Losely; he was at his son's lodgings in the City, near the commercial house in which the son was a clerk. On being told of the robbery, he seemed at first unaffectedly surprised, evincing no fear. He was asked whether he had gone into the study about two o'clock in the morning? He said, 'No; why should I?' The valet exclaimed, 'But I saw you—I knew you by that old grey cloak, with the red lining. Why, there it is now—on that chair yonder. I'll swear it is the same.' Losely then began to tremble visibly, and grew extremely pale. A question was next put to him as to the nail, but he seemed quite stupefied, muttering—'Good heavens! the cloak—you mean to say you saw that cloak?' They searched his person—found on him some sovereigns, silver, and one bank-note for five pounds. The number on that bank-note corresponded with a number in Gunston's pocket-book. He was asked to say where he got that five-pound note. He refused to answer. Gunston said,—'It is one of the

notes stolen from me!' Losely cried fiercely 'Take care what you say. How do you know?' Gunston replied,—'I took an account of the numbers of my notes on leaving your room. Here is the memorandum in my pocket-book —see—' Losely looked, and fell back as if shot. Losely's brother-in-law was in the room at the time, and he exclaimed,—Oh, William! you can't be guilty. You are the honestest fellow in the world. There must be some mistake, gentlemen. Where did you get the note, William—say?'

"Losely made no answer, but seemed lost in thought or stupefaction. I will go for your son, William—perhaps he may help to explain. Losely then seemed to wake up. 'My son! what! would you expose me before my son? he's gone into the country, as you know. What has he to do with it? I took the notes—there —I have confessed—Have done with it,'—or words to that effect.

"Nothing more of importance," said the Colonel, turning over the leaves of his MS., "except to account for the crime. And here we come back to the money-lender. You remember the valet said that a gentleman had called on Losely two days before the robbery. This proved to be the identical bill-discounter to whom Losely had paid away his fortune. This person deposed that Losely had written to him some days before, stating that he wanted to borrow two or three hundred pounds, which he could repay by instalments out of his salary. What would be the terms? The money-lender having occasion to be in the neighborhood, called to discuss the matter in person, and to ask if Losely could not get some other person to join in security—suggesting his brother-in-law. Losely replied that it was a favor he would never ask of any one; that his brother-in-law had no pecuniary means beyond his salary as a senior clerk; and, supposing that he (Losely) lost his place, which he might any day, if Gunston were displeased with him—how then could he be sure that his debt would not fall on the security?

"Upon which the money-lender remarked that the precarious nature of his income was the very reason why a security was wanted. And Losely answered, 'Ay; but you know that you incur that risk, and charge accordingly. Between you and me the debt and the hazard are mere matter of business, but between me and my security it would be a matter of honor.' Finally the money-lender agreed to find the sum required, though asking very high terms. Losely said he would consider, and let him know. There the conversation ended. But Gunston inquired, 'if Losely had ever had dealings with the money-lender before, and for what purpose it was likely he would want the money now;' and the money-lender answered 'that probably Losely had some sporting or gaming speculations on the sly, for that it was to pay a gambling debt that he had joined Captain Haughton in a bill for £1,200.' And Gunston afterwards told a friend of mine that this it was that decided him to appear as a witness at the trial; and you will observe that if Gunston had kept away there would have been no evidence sufficient to insure conviction. But Gunston considered that the man who could gamble away his whole fortune must be incorrigible, and that Losely, having concealed from him that he had become destitute by such transactions, must have been more than a mere security in a joint bill with Captain Haughton.

"Gunston could never have understood such an inconsistency in human nature, that the same man who broke open his bureau should have become responsible to the amount of his fortune for a debt of which he had not shared the discredit, and still less that such a man should, in case he had been so generously imprudent, have concealed his loss out of delicate tenderness for the character of the man to whom he owed his ruin. Therefore, in short, Gunston looked on his dishonest steward, not as a man tempted by a sudden impulse in some moment of distress, at which a previous life was belied, but as a confirmed, dissimulating sharper, to whom public justice allowed no mercy. And thus, Lionel, William Losely was prosecuted, tried, and sentenced to seven years' transportation. By pleading guilty, the term was probably made shorter than it otherwise would have been."

Lionel continued too agitated for words. The Colonel, not seeming to heed his emotions, again ran his eye over the MS.

"I observe here that there are some queries entered as to the evidence against Losely. The solicitor whom, when I heard of his arrest, I engaged and sent down to the place on his behalf—"

"You did! Heaven reward you!" sobbed out Lionel. "But my father?—where was he?"

"Then?—in his grave."

Lionel breathed a deep sigh, as of thankfulness.

"The lawyer, I say—a sharp fellow—was of opinion that if Losely had refused to plead guilty, he could have got him off in spite of his first confession—turned the suspicion against some one else. In the passage where the nail was picked, there was a door into the park. That door was found unbolted in the inside the next morning; a thief might therefore have thus entered, and passed at once into the study. The nail was discovered close by that door; the thief might have dropped it on putting out his light, which, by the valet's account, he must have done, when he was near the door in question, and required the light no more. Another circumstance in Losely's favor: just outside the door, near a laurel-bush, was found the fag-end of one of those small rose-colored wax-lights, which are often placed in lucifer-matchboxes. If this had been used by the thief, it would seem as if, extinguishing the light before he stepped into the air, he very natnrally jerked away the morsel of taper left, when, in the next moment, he was out of the house. But Losely would not have gone out of the house; nor was he, nor any one about the premises, ever known to make use of that kind of taper, which would rather appertain to the fashionable fopperies of a London dandy. You will have observed, too, the valet had not seen the thief's face. His testimony rested solely on the colors of a cloak, which, on cross-examination, might have gone for nothing. The dog had barked before the light was seen. It was not the light that made him bark. He wished to get out of the courtyard; that looked as if there were some stranger in the grounds beyond.

"Following up this clue, the lawyer ascertained that a strange man had been seen in the park towards the gray of the evening, walking up in the direction of the house. And here comes the strong point. At the railway station, about five miles from Mr. Gunston's, a strange man had arrived just in time to take his place in the night-train from the north towards London, stopping there at four o'clock in the morning. The station-master remembered the stranger buying the ticket, but did not remark his appearance. The porter did, however, so far notice him as he hurried into a first class carriage, that he said afterwards to the station-master, 'Why, that gentleman has a gray cloak just like Mr. Losely's. If he had not been thinner and taller, I should have thought it was Mr. Losely.' Well, Losely went to the same station the next morning, taking an early train, going thither on foot, with his carpet-bag in his hand; and both the porter and station-master declared that he had no cloak on him at the time; and as he got into a second-class carriage, the porter even said to him, 'Tis a sharp morning, sir; I'm afraid you'll be cold.' Furthermore, as to the purpose for which Losely had wished to borrow of the money-lender, his brother-in-law stated that Losely's son had been extravagant, had contracted debts, and was even hiding from his creditors in a county town, at which William Losely had stopped for a few hours on his way to London.

"He knew the young man's employer had written kindly to Losely several days before, lamenting the son's extravagance; intimating that unless his debts were discharged, he must lose the situation, in which otherwise he might soon rise to competence, for that he was quick and sharp; and that it was impossible not to feel indulgent towards him, he was so lively and so good-looking. The trader added that he would forbear to dismiss the young man as long as he could. It was on the receipt of that letter that Losely had entered into communication with the money-lender, whom he had come to town to seek, and to whose house he was actually going at the very hour of Gunston's arrival. But why borrow of the money-lender, if he had just stolen more money than he had any need to borrow?

"The most damning fact against Losely, by the discovery in his possession of the £5 note, of which Mr. Gunston deposed to have taken the number, was certainly hard to get over; still an ingenious lawyer might have thrown doubt on Gunston's testimony—a man confessedly so careless might have mistaken the number, etc. The lawyer went, with these hints for defence, to see Losely himself in prison; but Losely declined his help—became very angry—said that he would rather suffer death

itself than have suspicion transferred to some innocent man; and that, as to the cloak, it had been inside his carpet-bag. So you see, bad as he was, there was something inconsistently honorable left in him still. Poor Willy! he would not even subpœna any of his old friends as to his general character. But even if he had, what could the Court do since he pleaded guilty? And now dismiss that subject, it begins to pain me extremely. You were to speak to me about some one of the same name when my story was concluded. What is it?"

"I am so confused," faltered Lionel, still quivering with emotion, "that I can scarcely answer you—scarcely re-collect myself. But—but—while you were describing this poor William Losely, his talent for mimicry and acting, I could not help thinking that I had seen him." Lionel proceeded to speak of Gentleman Waife. "Can that be the man?"

Alban shook his head incredulously. He thought it so like a romantic youth to detect imaginary resemblances.

"No," said he, "my dear boy. My William Losely could never become a strolling-player in a village fair. Besides, I have good reason to believe that Willy is well off; probably made money in the colony by some lucky hit: for when do you say you saw your stroller? Five years ago? Well, not very long before that date—perhaps a year or two—less than two years, I am sure—this eccentric rascal sent Mr. Gunston, the man who had transported him, £100! Gunston, you must know, feeling more than ever bored and hipped when he lost Willy, tried to divert himself by becoming director in some railway company. The company proved a bubble; all turned their indignation on the one rich man who could pay where others cheated. Gunston was ruined—purse and character—fled to Calais; and there, less than seven years ago, when in great distress, he received from poor Willy a kind, affectionate, forgiving letter, and £100. I have this from Gunston's nearest relation, to whom he told it, crying like a child. Willy gave no address! but it is clear that at the time he must have been too well off to turn mountebank at your miserable exhibition. Poor, dear, rascally, infamous, big-hearted Willy," burst out the Colonel.—"I wish to heaven he had only robbed me!"

"Sir," said Lionel, "rely upon it, that man you described never robbed any one—'tis impossible."

"No—very possible!—human nature," said Alban Morley. "And, after all, he really owed Gunston that £100. For out of the sum stolen, Gunston received anonymously, even before the trial, all the missing notes, minus about that £100; and Willy, therefore, owed Gunston the money, but not, perhaps, that kind, forgiving letter. Pass on—quick—the subject is worse than the gout. You have heard before the name of Losely—possibly. There are many members of the old Baronet's family; but when or where did you hear it?"

"I will tell you; the man who holds the bill (ah, the word sickens me) reminded me when he called that I had seen him at my mother's house—a chance acquaintance of hers—professed great regard for me—great admiration for Mr. Darrell—and then surprised me by asking if I had never heard Mr. Darrell speak of Mr. Jasper Losely."

"Jasper!" said the Colonel; "Jasper!"—well, go on."

"When I answered, 'No,' Mr. Poole (that is his name) shook his head, and muttered, 'A sad affair—very bad business—I could do Mr. Darrell a great service if he would let me;' and then went on talking what seemed to me impertinent gibberish about 'family exposures' and 'poverty making men desperate,' and 'better compromise matters;' and finally wound up by begging me, 'if I loved Mr. Darrell, and wished to guard him from very great annoyance and suffering, to persuade him to give Mr. Poole an interview.' Then he talked about his own character in the City, and so forth, and entreating me 'not to think of paying him till quite convenient; that he would keep the bill in his desk; nobody should know of it; too happy to do me a favor'—laid his card on the table, and went away. Tell me, should I say anything to Mr. Darrell about this or not?"

"Certainly not, till I have seen Mr. Poole myself. You have the money to pay him about you? Give it to me, with Mr. Poole's address; I will call, and settle the matter. Just ring the bell." (To the servant entering)—"Order my horse round." Then, when they were again alone, turning to Lionel abruptly, laying one hand on his shoulder, with the other grasping his hand warmly, cordially—"Young

man," said Alban Morley, "I love you—I am interested in you—who would not be? I have gone through this story; put myself positively to pain—which I hate—solely for your good. You see what usury and money-lenders bring men to. Look me in the face! Do you feel now that you would have the 'moral courage' you before doubted of? Have you done with such things for ever?"

"For ever, so help me heaven! The lesson has been cruel, but I do thank and bless you for it."

"I knew you would. Mark this! never treat money affairs with levity — MONEY IS CHARACTER! Stop. I have bared a father's fault to a son. It was necessary—or even in his grave those faults might have revived in you. Now, I add this, if Charles Haughton —like you, handsome, high-spirited, favored by men, spoiled by women—if Charles Haughton, on entering life, could have seen, in the mirror I have held up to you, the consequence of pledging the morrow to pay for to-day, Charles Haughton would have been shocked as you are, cured as you will be. Humbled by your own first error, be lenient to all his. Take up his life where I first knew it: when his heart was loyal, his lips truthful. Raze out the interval; imagine that he gave birth to you in order to replace the leaves of existence we thus blot out and tear away. In every error avoided say—'Thus the father warns the son;' in every honorable action, or hard self-sacrifice, say—'Thus the son pays a father's debt."

Lionel, clasping his hands together, raised his eyes streaming with tears, as if uttering inly a vow to Heaven. The Colonel bowed his soldier-crest with religious reverence, and gilded from the room noiselessly.

CHAPTER VIII.

Being but one of the considerate pauses in a long journey, charitably afforded to the Reader.

COLONEL MORLEY found Mr. Poole at home, just returned from his office; he stayed with that gentleman nearly an hour, and then went straight to Darrell. As the time appointed to meet the French acquaintance, who depended on his hopitalities for a dinner, was now nearly arrived, Alban's conference with his English friend was necessarily brief and hurried, though long enough to confirm one fact in Mr. Poole's statement, which had been unknown to the Colonel before that day, and the admission of which inflicted on Guy Darrell a pang as sharp as ever wrenched confession from the lips of a prisoner in the cells of the Inquisition. On returning from Greenwich, and depositing his Frenchman in some melancholy theatre, time enough for that resentful foreigner to witness theft and murder committed upon an injured countryman's vaudeville, Alban hastened again to Carlton Gardens. He found Darrell alone, pacing his floor to and fro, in the habit he had acquired in earlier life, perhaps when meditating some complicated law case, or wrestling with himself against some secret sorrow. There are men of quick nerves who require a certain action of the body for the better composure of the mind; Darrell was one of them.

During these restless movements, alternated by abrupt pauses, equally inharmonious to the supreme quiet which characterized his listener's tastes and habits, the haughty gentleman disburdened himself of at least one of the secrets which he had hitherto guarded from his early friend. But as that secret connects itself with the history of a Person about whom it is well that the reader should now learn more than was known to Darrell himself, we will assume our privilege to be ourselves the narrator, and at the cost of such dramatic vivacity as may belong to dialogue, but with the gain to the reader of clearer insight into those portions of the past which the occasion permits us to reveal — we will weave into something like method the more imperfect and desultory communications by which Guy Darrell added to Alban Morley's distasteful catalogue of painful subjects. The reader will allow, perhaps, that we thus evince a desire to gratify his curiosity, when we state, that of Arabella Crane, Darrell spoke but in one brief and angry sentence, and that not by the name in which the reader as yet alone knows her; and it is with the antecedents of Arabella Crane that our explanation will tranquilly commence.

CHAPTER IX.

Grim Arabella Crane.

Once on a time there lived a merchant named Fossett, a widower with three children, of whom a daughter, Arabella, was by some years the eldest. He was much respected, deemed a warm man, and a safe—attended diligently to his business—suffered no partner, no foreman, to dictate or to intermeddle—liked his comforts, but made no pretence to fashion. His villa was at Clapham, not a showy but a solid edifice, with lodge, lawn, and gardens chiefly notable for what is technically called *glass*—viz., a range of glass-houses on the most improved principles: the heaviest pines, the earliest strawberries. "I'm no judge of flowers," quoth Mr. Fossett, meekly. "Give me a plain lawn, provided it be close shaven. But I say to my gardener, 'Forcing is my hobby—a cucumber with my fish all the year round!'" Yet do not suppose Mr. Fossett ostentatious—quite the reverse. He would no more ruin himself for the sake of dazzling others, than he would for the sake of serving them. He liked a warm house, spacious rooms, good living, old wine, for their inherent merits. He cared not to parade them to public envy. When he dined alone, or with a single favored guest, the best Lafitte, the oldest sherry!—when extending the rights of miscellaneous hospitality to neighbors, relations, or other slight acquaintances — for Lafitte, Julien; and for Sherry, Cape!—Thus not provoking vanity, nor courting notice, Mr. Fossett was without an enemy, and seemed without a care. Formal were his manners, formal his household, formal even the stout cob that bore him from Cheapside to Clapham, from Clapham to Cheapside. That cob could not even prick up its ears if it wished to shy—its ears were cropped, so were its mane and its tail.

Arabella early gave promise of beauty, and more than ordinary power of intellect and character. Her father bestowed on her every advantage of education. She was sent to a select boarding-school of the highest reputation; the strictest discipline, the best masters, the longest bills. At the age of seventeen she had become the show pupil of the seminary. Friends wondered somewhat why the prim merchant took such pains to lavish on his daughter the worldly accomplishments which seemed to give him no pleasure, and of which he never spoke with pride. But certainly, if she was so clever—first-rate musician, exquisite artist, accomplished linguist, "it was very nice in old Fossett to bear it so meekly, never crying her up, nor showing her off to less fortunate parents—very nice in him—good sense—greatness of mind."

"Arabella," said the worthy man, one day, a little time after his eldest daughter had left school for good; "Arabella," said he, "Mrs. ——," naming the head teacher in that famous school, "pays you a very high compliment in a letter I received from her this morning. She says it is a pity you are not a poor man's daughter—that you are so steady and so clever that you could make a fortune for yourself as a teacher."

Arabella at that age could smile gaily, and gaily she smiled at the notion conveyed in the compliment.

"No one can guess," resumed the father, twirling his thumbs, and speaking rather through his nose, "the ups and downs in this mortal sphere of trial, 'specially in the mercantile community. If ever, when I'm dead and gone, adversity should come upon you, you will gratefully remember that I have given you the best of education, and take care of your little brother and sister, who are both—stupid!"

These doleful words did not make much impression on Arabella, uttered as they were in a handsome drawing-room, opening on the neat-shaven lawn it took three gardeners to shave, with a glittering side-view of those galleries of glass in which strawberries were ripe at Christmas, and cucumbers never failed to fish. Time went on. Arabella was now twenty-three—a very fine girl, with a decided manner—much occupied by her music, her drawing, her books, and her fancies. Fancies—for, like most girls with very active heads and idle hearts, she had a vague yearning for some excitement beyond the monotonous routine of a young lady's life; and the latent force of her nature inclined her to admire whatever was out of the beaten track—whatever was wild and daring. She had received two or three offers from young gentlemen in the same mercantile community as that which surrounded her father

in this sphere of trial. But they did not please her; and she believed her father when he said that they only courted her under the idea that he would come down with something handsome; "whereas," said the merchant, "I hope you will marry an honest man, who will like you for yourself, and wait for your fortune till my will is read. As King William says to his son, in the *History of England*, 'I don't mean to strip till I go to bed.'"

One night, at a ball in Clapham, Arabella saw the man who was destined to exercise so baleful an influence over her existence. Jasper Losely had been brought to this ball by a young fellow-clerk in the same commercial house as himself; and then in all the bloom of that conspicuous beauty, to which the miniature Arabella had placed before his eyes so many years afterwards did but feeble justice, it may well be conceived that he concentred on himself the admiring gaze of the assembly. Jasper was younger than Arabella; but, what with the height of his stature and the self-confidence of his air, he looked four or five and twenty. Certainly, in so far as the distance from childhood may be estimated by the loss of innocence, Jasper migh have been any age! He was told that old Fossett's daughter would have a very fine fortune; that she was a strong-minded young lady, who governed her father, and would choose for herself; and accordingly he devoted himself to Arabella the whole of the evening. The effect produced on the mind of this ill-fated woman by her dazzling admirer was as sudden as it proved to be lasting. There was a strange charm in the very contrast between his rattling audacity and the bashful formalties of the swains who had hitherto wooed her as if she frightened them. Even his good looks fascinated her less than that vital energy and power about the lawless brute, which to her seemed the elements of heroic character, though but the attributes of riotous spirits, magnificent formation, flattered vanity, and imperious egotism. She was a bird gazing spell-bound on a gay young boa-constrictor, darting from bough to bough, sunning its brilliant hues, and showing off all its beauty, just before it takes the bird for its breakfast.

When they parted that night, their intimacy had so far advanced that arrangements had been made for its continuance. Arabella had an instinctive foreboding that her father would be less charmed than herself with Jasper Losely; that, if Jasper were presented to him, he would possibly forbid her farther acquaintance with a young clerk, however superb his outward appearance. She took the first false step. She had a maiden aunt by the mother's side, who lived in Bloomsbury, gave and went to small parties, to which Jasper could easily get introduced. She arranged to pay a visit for some weeks to this aunt, who was then very civil to her, accepting with marked kindness seasonable presents of strawberries, pines, spring chickens, and so forth, and offering in turn, whenever it was convenient, a spare room, and whatever amusement a round of small parties, and the innocent flirtations incidental thereto, could bestow. Arabella said nothing to her father about Jasper Losely, and to her aunt's she went. Arabella saw Jasper very often; they became engaged to each other, exchanged vows and love-tokens, locks of hair, &c. Jasper, already much troubled by duns, became naturally ardent to insure his felicty and Arabella's supposed fortune. Arabella at last summoned courage, and spoke to her father. To her delighted surprise, Mr. Fosset, after some moralizing, more on the uncertainty of life in general than her clandestine proceedings in particular, agreed to see Mr. Jasper Losely, and asked him down to dinner.

After dinner, over a bottle of Lafitte, in an exceedingly plain but exceedingly weighty silver jug, which made Jasper's mouth water (I mean the jug), Mr. Fossett, commencing with that somewhat coarse though royal saying of William the Conqueror, with which he had before edified his daughter, assured Jasper that he gave his full consent to the young gentleman's nuptials with Arabella, provided Jasper or his relations would maintain her in a plain respectable way, and wait for her fortune till his (Fossett's) will was read. What that fortune would be, Mr. Fossett declined even to hint. Jasper went away very much cooled. Still the engagement remained in force; the nuptials were tacitly deferred. Jasper and his relations maintain a wife! Preposterous idea! It would take a Clan of relations and a Zenana of wives to maintain in that state to which he deemed himself entitled—

Jasper himself! But just as he was meditating the possibility of a compromise with old Fossett, by which he would agree to wait till the will was read for contingent advantages, provided Fossett, in his turn, would agree in the meanwhile to afford lodging and board, with a trifle for pocket-money, to Arabella and himself, in the Clapham Villa, which, though not partial to rural scenery, Jasper preferred, on the whole, to a second floor in the City,—old Fossett fell ill, took to his bed; was unable to attend to his business, some one else attended to it; and the consequence was, that the house stopped payment, and was discovered to have been insolvent for the last ten years. Not a discreditable bankruptcy.

There might perhaps be seven shillings in the pound ultimately paid, and not more than forty families irretrievably ruined. Old Fossett, safe in his bed, bore the affliction with philosophical composure; observed to Arabella that he had always warned her of the ups and downs in this sphere of trial; referred again with pride to her first-rate education; commended again to her care Tom and Biddy; and, declaring that he died in charity with all men, resigned himself to the last slumber.

Arabella at first sought a refuge with her maiden aunt. But that lady, though not hit in pocket, by her brother-in-law's failure, was more vehement against his memory than his most injured creditor—not only that she deemed herself unjustly defrauded of the pines, strawberries and spring chickens, by which she had been enabled to give small parties at small cost, though with ample show, but that she was robbed of the consequence she had hitherto derived from the supposed expectations of her niece. In short, her welcome was so hostile, and her condolence so cutting, that Arabella quitted her door with a solemn determination never again to enter it.

And now the nobler qualities of the bankrupt's daughter rose at once into play. Left penniless, she resolved by her own exertions to support and to rear her young brother and sister. The great school to which she had been the ornament willingly received her as a teacher, until some more advantageous place in a private family, and with a salary worthy of her talents and accomplishments, could be found. Her intercourse with Jasper became necessarily suspended. She had the generosity to write, offering to release him from his engagement. Jasper considered himself fully released without that letter; but he deemed it neither gallant nor discreet to say so. Arabella might obtain a situation with larger salary than she could possibly need, the superfluities whereof Jasper might undertake to invest. Her aunt had evidently something to leave, though she might nave nothing to give. In fine, Arabella, if not rich enough for a wife, might be often rich enough for a friend at need; and so long as he was engaged to her for life, it must be not more her pleasure than her duty to assist him to live. Besides, independently of these prudential though not ardent motives for declaring unalterable fidelity to troth, Jasper at that time really did entertain what he called love for the handsome young woman—flattered that one of attainments so superior to all the girls he had ever known, should be so proud even less of his affection for her, than her own affection for himself. Thus the engagement lasted—interviews none—letters frequent. Arabella worked hard, looking to the future; Jasper worked as little as possible, and was very much bored by the present.

Unhappily, as it turned out, so great a sympathy, not only amongst the teachers, but amongst her old schoolfellws, was felt for Arabella's reverse; her character for steadiness, as well as talent, stood so high, and there was something so creditable in her resolution to maintain her orphan brother and sister, that an effort was made to procure her a livelihood much more lucrative, and more independent than she could obtain either in a school or a family. Why not take a small house of her own, live there with her fellow-orphans, and give lessons out by the hour? Several families at once agreed so to engage her, and an income adequate to all her wants assured. Arabella adopted this plan. She took the house; Bridgett Greggs, the nurse of her infancy, became her servant, and soon to that house, stealthily in the shades of the evening, glided Jasper Losely. She could not struggle against his influence—had not the heart to refuse his visits—he was so poor—in such scrapes—and professed himself to be so unhappy. There now became some one else to toil for, besides the little brother and sister. But what were Arabella's gains to a

man who already gambled? New afflictions smote her. A contagious fever broke out in the neighborhood; her little brother caught it; her little sister sickened the next day; in less than a week two small coffins were borne from her door by the Black Horses—borne to that plot of sunny turf in the pretty suburban cemetery, bought with the last earnings made for the little ones by the mother-like sister:—Motherless lone survivor! what! no friend on earth, no soother but that direful Jasper! Alas! the truly dangerous Venus is not that Erycina round whom circle Jest and Laughter.

Sorrow, and that sense of solitude which makes us welcome a footstep as a child left in the haunting dark welcomes the entrance of light, weaken the outworks of female virtue more than all the vain levities of mirth, or the flatteries which follow the path of Beauty through the crowd. Alas, and alas! let the tale hurry on!

Jasper Losely has still more solemnly sworn to marry his adored Arabella. But when? When they are rich enough. She feels as if her spirit was gone—as if she could work no more. She was no weak commonplace girl, whom love can console for shame. She had been rigidly brought up; her sense of female rectitude was keen; her remorse was noiseless, but it was stern. Harassments of a more vulgar nature beset her: she had forestalled her sources of income; she had contracted debts for Jasper's sake;—in vain: her purse was emptied, yet his no fuller. His creditors pressed him; he told her that he must hide. One winter's day he thus departed; she saw him no more for a year. She heard, a few days after he left her, of his father's crime and committal. Jasper was sent abroad by his maternal uncle, at his father's prayer; sent to a commercial house in France, in which the uncle obtained him a situation. In fact, the young man had been despatched to France under another name, in order to save him from the obloquy which his father had brought upon his own.

Soon came William Loselys' trial and sentence. Arabella felt the disgrace acutely—felt how it would affect the audacious insolent Jasper; did not wonder that he forbore to write to her. She conceived him bowed by shame, but she was buoyed up by her conviction that they should meet again. For good or for ill, she held herself bound to him for life. But meanwhile the debts she had incurred on his account came upon her. She was forced to dispose of her house; and at this time Mrs. Lyndsay, looking out for some first-rate superior governess for Matilda Darrell, was urged by all means to try and secure for that post Arabella Fossett. The highest testimonials from the school at which she had been reared, from the most eminent professional masters, from the families at which she had recently taught, being all brought to bear upon Mr. Darrell, he authorized Mrs. Lyndsay to propose such a salary as could not fail to secure a teacher of such rare qualifications. And thus Arabella became governess to Miss Darrell.

There is a kind of young lady of whom her nearest relations will say, "I can't make that girl out." Matilda Darrell was that kind of young lady. She talked very little; she moved very noiselessly; she seemed to regard herself as a secret which she had solemnly sworn not to let out. She had been steeped in slyness from her early infancy by a sly mother. Mrs. Darrell was a woman who had always something to conceal. There was always some note to be thrust out of sight; some visit not to be spoken of; something or other which Matilda was not on any account to mention to Papa.

When Mrs. Darrell died, Matilda was still a child, but she still continued to view her father as a person against whom prudence demanded her to be constantly on her guard. It was not that she was exactly afraid of him—he was very gentle to her, as he was to all children; but his loyal nature was antipathetic to hers. She had no sympathy with him. How confide her thoughts to him? She had an instinctive knowledge that those thoughts were not such as could harmonize with his. Yet, though taciturn, uncaressing, undemonstrative, she appeared mild and docile. Her reserve was ascribed to constitutional timidity. Timid to a degree she usually seemed; yet, when you thought you had solved the enigma, she said or did something so coolly determined, that you were forced again to exclaim, "I can't make that girl out!" She was not quick at her lessons. You had settled in your mind that she was dull, when, by a chance remark, you were startled to find that she was very sharp; keenly observant, when

you had fancied her fast asleep. She had seemed, since her mother's death, more fond of Mrs. Lyndsay and Caroline than of any other human beings—always appeared sullen or out of spirits when they were absent; yet she confided to them no more than she did to her father. You would suppose from this description that Matilda could inspire no liking in those with whom she lived. Not so; her very secretiveness had a sort of attraction—a puzzle always creates some interest. Then her face, though neither handsome nor pretty, had in it a treacherous softness—a subdued, depressed expression. A kind observer could not but say with an indulgent pity, "There must be a good deal of heart in that girl, if one could but—make her out."

She appeared to take at once to Arabella more than she had taken to Mrs. Lyndsay, or even to Caroline, with whom she had been brought up as a sister, but who, then joyous and quick and innocently fearless—with her soul in her eyes and her heart on her lips—had no charm for Matilda, because there she saw no secret to penetrate, and her she had no object in deceiving.

But this stranger, of accomplishments so rare, of character so decided, with a settled gloom on her lip, a gathered care on her brow—*there* was some-one to study, and some one with whom she felt a sympathy; for she detected at once that Arabella was also a secret.

At first, Arabella, absorbed in her own reflections, gave to Matilda but the mechanical attention which a professional teacher bestows on an ordinary pupil. But an interest in Matilda sprung up in her breast, in proportion as she conceived a venerating gratitude for Darrell. He was aware of the pomp and circumstance which had surrounded her earlier years; he respected the credible energy with which she had devoted her talents to the support of the young children thrown upon her care; compassionated her bereavement of those little fellow-orphans for whom toil had been rendered sweet; and he strove, by a kindness of forethought and a delicacy of attention, which were the more prized in a man so eminent and so preoccupied, to make her forget that she was a salaried teacher—to place her saliently, and as a matter of course, in the position of gentlewoman, guest, and friend.

Recognizing in her a certain vigor and force of intellect apart from her mere accomplishments, he would flatter her scholastic pride, by referring to her memory in some question of reading, or consulting her judgment on some point of critical taste. She, in return, was touched by his chivalrous kindness to the depth of a nature that, though already seriously injured by its unhappy contact with a soul like Jasper's, retained that capacity of gratitude, the loss of which is humanity's last depravation. Nor this alone: Arabella was startled by the intellect and character of Darrell into that kind of homage which a woman, who has hitherto met but her own intellectual inferiors, renders to the first distinguished personage in whom she recognizes, half with humility and half with awe, an understanding and a culture to which her own reason is but the flimsy glass-house, and her own knowledge but the forced exotic.

Arabella, thus roused from her first listlessness, sought to requite Darrell's kindness by exerting every energy to render his insipid daughter an accomplished woman. So far as mere ornamental education extends, the teacher was more successful than, with all her experience, her skill, and her zeal, she had presumed to anticipate. Matilda, without ear, or taste, or love for music, became a very fair mechanical musician.

Without one artistic predisposition, she achieved the science of perspective — she attained even to the mixture of colors—she filled a portfolio with drawings which no young lady need have been ashamed to see circling round a drawing-room. She carried Matilda's thin mind to the farthest bound it could have reached without snapping, through an elegant range of selected histories and harmless feminine classics—through Gallic dialogues—through Tuscan themes—through Teuton verbs—yea, across the invaded bounds of astonished Science into the Elementary Ologies. And all this being done, Matilda Darrell was exactly the same creature that she was before. In all that related to character, to inclinations, to heart, even that consummate teacher could give no intelligible answer, when Mrs. Lyndsay, in her softest accents (and no accents ever were softer), sighed—"Poor dear Matilda! can *you* make her out, Miss Fossett?" Miss Fossett could not make her out. But, after the most attentive

study, Miss Fossett had inly decided that there was nothing to make out—that, like many other very nice girls, Matilda Darrell was a harmless nullity, what you call "a Miss:" white deal or willow, to which Miss Fossett had done all in the way of increasing its value as ornamental furniture, when she had veneered it over with rosewood or satinwood, enriched its edges with ormolu, and strewed its surface with nicknacks and albums.

But Arabella firmly believed Matilda Darrell to be a quiet, honest, good sort of "Miss," on the whole—very fond of her, Arabella. The teacher had been several months in Darrell's family, when Caroline Lyndsay, who had been almost domesticated with Matilda (sharing the lessons bestowed on the latter, whether by Miss Fossett or visiting masters), was taken away by Mrs. Lyndsay, on a visit to the old Marchioness of Montfort. Matilda, who was to come out the next year, was thus almost exclusively with Arabella, who redoubled all her pains to veneer the white deal, and protect with ormolu its feeble edges—so that, when it "came out," all should admire that thoroughly fashionable piece of furniture. It was the habit of Miss Fossett and her pupil to take a morning walk in the quiet retreats of the Green Park; and one morning, as they were thus strolling, nurserymaids and children, and elderly folks, who were ordered to take early exercise, undulating round their unsuspecting way,—suddenly, right upon their path (unlooked-for as the wolf that startled Horace in the Sabine wood, but infinitely more deadly than that runaway animal), came Jasper Losely! Arabella uttered a faint scream. She could not resist—had no thought of resisting—the impulse to bound forward—lay her hand on his arm. She was too agitated to perceive whether his predominant feeling was surprise or rapture.

A few hurried words were exchanged, while Matilda Darrell gave one sidelong glance towards the handsome stranger, and walked quietly by them. On his part, Jasper said that he had just returned to London—that he had abandoned for ever all idea of a commercial life—that his father's misfortune (he gave that gentle appellation to the incident of penal transportation) had severed him from all former friends, ties, habits—that he had dropped the name of Losely for ever—entreated Arabella not to betray it—his name now was Hammond—his "prospects," he said, "fairer than they had ever been." Under the name of Hammond, as an independent gentleman, he had made friends more powerful than he could ever have made under the name of Losely as a city clerk. He blushed to think he had ever been a city clerk. No doubt he should get into some Government office; and then, O then, with assured income and the certainty to rise, he might claim the longed-for hand of the "best of creatures."

On Arabella's part, she hastily explained her present position. She was governess to Miss Darrell—that was Miss Darrell. Arabella must not leave her walking on by herself—she would write to him. Addresses were exchanged—Jasper gave a very neat card—"Mr. Hammond, No. ——, Duke Street, St. James's."

Arabella, with a beating heart, hastened to join her friend. At the rapid glance she had taken of her perfidious lover, she thought him, if possible, improved. His dress, always studied, was more to the fashion of polished society, more simply correct—his air more decided. Altogether he looked prosperous, and his manner had never been more seductive, in its mixture of easy self-confidence and hypocritical coaxing. In fact, Jasper had not been long in the French commercial house—to which he had been sent out of the way while his father's trial was proceeding and the shame of it fresh—before certain licenses of conduct had resulted in his dismissal. But, meanwhile, he had made many friends amongst young men of his own age—those loose wild *viveurs* who, without doing anything the law can punish as dishonest, contrive for a few fast years to live very showily on their wits. In that strange social fermentation which still prevails in a country where an aristocracy of birth, exceedingly impoverished, and exceedingly numerous so far as the right to prefix a *De* to the name, or to stamp a coronet on the card, can constitute an aristocrat—is diffused amongst an ambitious, adventurous, restless, and not inelegant young democracy—each cemented with the other by that fiction of law called *égalité*;—in that yet unsettled and struggling society in which so much of the old has been irretrievably destroyed, and so little of the new has been solidly constructed—there

are much greater varieties, infinitely more subtle grades and distinctions, in the region of life which lies between respectability and disgrace, than can be found in a country like ours.

The French novels and dramas may apply less a mirror than a magnifying-glass to the beings that move through that region. But still those French novels and dramas do not unfaithfully represent the classifications of which they exaggerate the types. Those strange combinations, into one tableau, of students and grisettes, opera-dancers, authors, viscounts, swindlers, romantic Lorettes, gamblers on the Bourse, whose pedigree dates from the Crusades; impostors, taking titles from villages in which their grandsires might have been saddlers—and if detected, the detection but a matter of laugh; delicate women living like lawless men; men making trade out of love, like dissolute women, yet with point of honor so nice, that, doubt their truth or their courage, and—piff! you are in Charon's boat,—humanity in every civilized land may present single specimens, more or less, answering to each thus described. But where, save in France, find them all, if not precisely in the same *salons*, yet so crossing each other to and fro as to constitute a social phase, and give color to a literature of unquestionable genius? And where, over orgies so miscellaneously Berycynthian, an atmosphere so elegantly Horatian? And where can coarseness so vanish into polished expression as in that diamond-like language—all terseness and sparkle—which, as friendly to Wit in its airiest prose, as hostile to Passsion in its torrent or cloud-wrack of poetry, seems invented by the Grace out of spite to the Muse?

Into circles such as those of which the dim outline is here so imperfectly sketched, Jasper Losely niched himself, as *Le bel Anglais*. (Pleasant representative of the English nation!) Not that those circles are to have the sole credit of his corruption. No! Justice is justice! Stand we up for our native land! *Le bel Anglais* entered those circles a much greater knave than most of those whom he found there. But there, at least, he learned to set a yet higher value on his youth, and strength, and comeliness—on his readiness of resource—on the reckless audacity that browbeat timid and some even valiant men—on the six feet one of faultless symmetry that captivated foolish, and some even sensible women. Gaming was, however, his vice by predilection. A month before Arabella met him, he had had a rare run of luck. On the strength of it he had resolved to return to London, and (wholly oblivious of "the best of creatures" till she had thus startled him) hunt out and swoop off with an heiress. Three French friends accompanied him. Each had the same object. Each believed that London swarmed with heiresses. They were all three fine-looking men. One was a Count,—at least he said so. But proud of his rank?—not a bit of it: all for liberty (no man more likely to lose it)—all for fraternity (no man you would less love as a brother). And as for *égalité!*—the son of a shoemaker who was *homme de lettres*, and wrote in a journal, inserted a jest on the Count's countship.

"All men are equal before the pistol," said the Count; and knowing that in that respect he was equal to most, having practised at *poupées* from the age of fourteen, he called out the son of Crispin and shot him through the lungs. Another of Jasper's travelling friends was an *enfant du peuple*—boasted that he was a foundling. He made verses of lugubrious strain, and taught Jasper how to shuffle at whist. The third, like Jasper, had been designed for trade; and, like Jasper, he had a soul above it. In politics he was a Communist—in talk a Philanthropist. He was the cleverest man of them all, and is now at the galleys. The fate of his two compatriots—more obscure—it is not my duty to discover. In that peculiar walk of life Jasper is as much as I can possibly manage.

It need not be said that Jasper carefully abstained from reminding his old city friends of his existence. It was his object and his hope to drop all identity with that son of a convict who had been sent out of the way to escape humiliation. In this resolve he was the more confirmed because he had no old city friends out of whom anything could be well got. His poor uncle, who alone of his relations in England had been privy to his change of name, was dead; his end hastened by grief for William Losely's disgrace, and the bad reports he had received from France of the conduct of William Losely's son.

That uncle had left, in circumstances too

straitened to admit the waste of a shilling, a widow of very rigid opinions; who, if ever by some miraculous turn in the wheel of fortune she could have become rich enough to slay a fatted calf, would never have given the shin-bone of it to a prodigal like Jasper, even had he been her own penitent son, instead of a graceless step-nephew. Therefore as all civilization proceeds westward, Jasper turned his face from the east; and had no more idea of recrossing Temple Bar in search of fortune, friends, or kindred, than a modern Welshman would dream of a pilgrimage to Asian shores to re-embrace those distant relatives whom Hu Gadarn left behind him countless centuries ago, when that mythical chief conducted his faithful Cymrians over the Hazy Sea to this happy Island of Honey.*

Two days after his *rencontre* with Arabella in the Green Park, the *soi-disant* Hammond having, in the interim, learned that Darrell was immensely rich, and that Matilda was his only surviving child, did not fail to find himself in the Green Park again—and again—and again!

Arabella, of course, felt how wrong it was to allow him to accost her, and walk by one side of her while Miss Darrell was on the other. But she felt, also, as if it would be much more wrong to slip out and meet him alone. Not for worlds would she again have placed herself in such peril. To refuse to meet him at all?—she had not strength enough for *that!* Her joy at seeing him was so immense. And nothing could be more respectful than Jasper's manner and conversation. Whatever of warmer and more impassioned sentiment was exchanged between them, passed in notes. Jasper had suggested to Arabella to represent him to Matilda as some near relation. But Arabella refused all such disguise. Her sole claim to self-respect was in considering him solemnly engaged to her—the man she was to marry. And, after the second time they thus met, she said to Matilda, who had not questioned her by a word—by a look—"I was to be married to that gentleman before my father died; we are to be married as soon as we have something to live upon."

Matilda made some commonplace but kindly rejoinder. And thus she became raised into Arabella's confidence,—so far as that confidence could be given, without betraying Jasper's real name, or one darker memory in herself. Luxury, indeed, it was to Arabella to find, at last, some one to whom she could speak of that betrothal in which her whole future was invested—of that affection which was her heart's sheet-anchor—of that home, humble it might be, and far off, but to which Time rarely fails to bring the Two, if never weary of the trust to become as One.

Talking thus, Arabella forgot the relationship of pupil and teacher; it was as woman to woman—girl to girl—friend to friend. Matilda seemed touched by the confidence—flattered to possess at last another's secret. Arabella was a little chafed that she did not seem to admire Jasper as much as Arabella thought the whole world must admire. Matilda excused herself. "She had scarcely noticed Mr. Hammond. Yes; she had no doubt he would be considered handsome; but she owned, though it might be bad taste, that she preferred a pale complexion, with auburn hair;" and then she sighed and looked away, as if she had, in the course of her secret life, encountered some fatal pale complexion, with never-to-be-forgotten auburn hair. Not a word was said by either Matilda or Arabella as to concealing from Mr. Darrell these meetings with Mr. Hammond. Perhaps Arabella could not stoop to ask that secresy; but there was no necessity to ask; Matilda was always too rejoiced to have something to conceal.

Now, in these interviews, Jasper scarcely ever addressed himself to Matilda; not twenty spoken words could have passed between them; yet, in the very third interview, Matilda's sly fingers had closed on a sly note. And from that day, in each interview, Arabella walking in the centre, Jasper on one side, Matilda the other—behind Arabella's back—passed the sly fingers and the sly notes, which Matilda received and answered. Not more than twelve or fourteen times was even this interchange effected. Darrell was about to move to Fawley. All such meetings would be now suspended. Two or three morning before that fixed for leaving London, Matilda's room was found vacant. She was gone. Arabella was the first to discover her flight, the first to learn its cause. Matilda had

* *Mel Ynnys*—Isle of Honey. One of the poetic names given to England in the language of the ancient Britons.

left on her writing-table a letter for Miss Fossett. It was very short, very quietly expressed, and it rested her justification on a note from Jasper, which she enclosed—a note in which that gallant hero, ridiculing the idea that he could ever have been in love with Arabella, declared that he would destroy himself if Matilda refused to fly. *She* need not fear such angelic confidence in him. No! Even

> "Had he a heart for falsehood framed,
> He ne'er could injure her."

Stifling each noisier cry—but panting—gasping—literally half out of her mind, Arabella rushed into Darrell's study. He, unsuspecting man, calmly bending over his dull books, was startled by her apparition Few minutes sufficed to tell him all that it concerned him to learn. Few brief questions, few passionate answers, brought him to the very worst.

Who, and what, was this Mr. Hammond? Heaven of heavens! the son of William Losely—of a transported felon!

Arabella exulted in a reply which gave her a moment's triumph over the rival who had filched from her such a prize. Roused from his first misery and sense of abasement in this discovery, Darrell's wrath was naturally poured, not on the fugitive child, but on the frontless woman, who, buoyed up by her own rage and sense of wrong, faced him, and did not cower. She, the faithless governess, had presented to her pupil this convict's son in another name; she owned it—she had trepanned into the snares of so vile a fortune-hunter an ignorant child: she might feign amaze—act remorse—she must have been the man's accomplice. Stung, amidst all the bewilderment of her anguish, by this charge, which, at least, she did not deserve, Arabella tore from her bosom Jasper's recent letters to herself—letters all devotion and passion—placed them before Darrell, and bade him read. Nothing thought she then of name and fame—nothing but of her wrongs and of her woes. Compared to herself, Matilda seemed the perfidious criminal—she the injured victim. Darrell but glanced over the letters; they were signed "your loving husband."

"What is this?" he exclaimed; "are you married to the man?"

"Yes," cried Arabella, "in the eyes of Heaven!"

To Darrell's penetration there was no mistaking the significance of those words and that look; and his wrath redoubled. Anger in him, when once aroused, was terrible; he had small need of words to vent it. His eye withered, his gesture appalled. Conscious but of one burning firebrand in brain and heart—of a sense that youth, joy, and hope were for ever gone, that the world could never be the same again—Arabella left the house, her character lost, her talents useless, her very means of existence stopped. Who henceforth would take *her* to teach? Who henceforth place their children under *her* charge?

She shrank into a gloomy lodging—she shut herself up alone with her despair. Strange though it may seem, her anger against Jasper was slight as compared with the intensity of her hate to Matilda. And stranger still it may seem, that as her thoughts recovered from their first chaos, she felt more embittered against the world, more crushed by a sense of shame, and yet galled by a no less keen sense of injustice, in recalling the scorn with which Darrell had rejected all excuse for her conduct in the misery it had occasioned her, than she did by the consciousness of her own lamentable errors. As in Darrell's esteem there was something that, to those who could appreciate it, seemed invaluable, so in his contempt to those who had cherished that esteem, there was a weight of ignominy, as if a judge had pronounced a sentence that outlaws the rest of life.

Arabella had not much left out of her munificent salary. What she had hitherto laid by had passed to Jasper—defraying, perhaps, the very cost of his flight with her treacherous rival. When her money was gone, she pawned the poor relics of her innocent happy girlhood, which she had been permitted to take from her father's home, and had borne with her whereever she went, like household gods,—the prize-books, the lute, the costly work-box, the very bird-cage, all which the reader will remember to have seen in her later life, the books never opened—the lute broken, the bird long, long, long vanished from the cage! Never did she think she should redeem those pledges from that Golgotha, which takes, rarely to give back, so many hallowed tokens of the Dreamland called "Better Days,"—the trinkets worn at the first ball, the ring that was given with

the earliest love-vow—yea, even the very bells and coral that pleased the infant in his dainty cradle, and the very Bible in which the lips that now bargain for sixpence more, read to some grey-haired father on his bed of death!

Soon the sums thus miserably raised were as miserably doled away. With a sullen apathy the woman contemplated famine. She would make no effort to live—appeal to no relations, no friends. It was a kind of vengeance she took on others, to let herself drift on to death. She had retreated from lodging to lodging, each obscurer, more desolate than the other. Now she could no longer pay rent for the humblest room; now she was told to go forth—whither? She knew not—cared not—took her way towards the River, as by that instinct which, when the mind is diseased, tends towards self-destruction, scarce less involuntarily than it turns, in health, towards self-preservation. Just as she passed under the lamplight at the foot of Westminster Bridge, a man looked at her, and seized her arm. She raised her head with a chilly, melancholy scorn, as if she had received an insult—as if she feared that the man knew the stain upon her name, and dreamed in his folly, that the dread of death might cause her to sin again.

"Do you not know me?" said the man; "more strange that I should recognize you! Dear, dear, and what a dress!—how you *are* altered! Poor thing!"

At the words "poor thing" Arabella burst into tears; and in those tears the heavy cloud on her brain seemed to melt away.

"I have been inquiring, seeking, for you everywhere, Miss," resumed the man. "Surely, you know me now! Your poor aunt's lawyer! She is no more—died last week. She has left you all she had in the world; and a very pretty income it is, too, for a single lady."

Thus it was that we find Arabella installed in the dreary comforts of Podden Place. "She exchanged," she said, "in honor to her aunt's memory, her own name for that of Crane, which her aunt had borne—her own mother's maiden name." She assumed, though still so young, that title of "Mrs." which spinsters, grown venerable, moodily adopt when they desire all mankind to know that henceforth they relinquish the vanities of tender misses—that, become mistress of themselves, they defy and spit upon our worthless sex, which, whatever its repentance, is warned that it repents in vain. Most of her aunt's property was in houses, in various districts of Bloomsbury. Arabella moved from one to the other of these tenements, till she settled for good into the dullest of all. To make it duller yet, by contrast with the past, the Golgotha for once gave up its buried treasures — broken lute, birdless cage!

Somewhere about two years after Matilda's death, Arabella happened to be in the office of the agent who collected her house-rents, when a well-dressed man entered, and, leaning over the counter, said—"There is an advertisement in to-day's *Times* about a lady who offers a home, education, and so forth, to any little motherless girl; terms moderate, as said lady loves children for their own sake. Advertiser refers to your office for particulars—give them!"

The agent turned to his books; and Arabella turned towards the inquirer. "For whose child do you want a home, Jasper Losely?"

Jasper started. "Arabella! Best of creatures! And can you deign to speak to such a vil——"

"Hush—let us walk. Never mind the advertisement of a stranger. I may find a home for a motherless child—a home that will cost you nothing."

She drew him into the street. "But can this be the child of—of—Matilda Darrell?"

"Bella!" replied, in coaxing accents, that most execrable of lady-killers," can I trust you?—can you be my friend in spite of my having been such a very sad dog? But money—what can one do without money in this world? 'Had I a heart for falsehood framed, it would ne'er have injured you'—if I had not been so cursedly hard up! And indeed now, if you would but condescend to forgive and forget, perhaps some day or other we may be Darby and Joan—only, you see, just at this moment I am really not worthy of such a Joan. You know, of course, that I am a widower—not inconsolable."

"Yes; I read of Mrs. Hammond's death in an old newspaper."

"And you did not read of her baby's death, too—some weeks afterwards?"

"No; it is seldom that I see a newspaper. Is the infant dead?"

"Hum—you shall hear.' And Jasper entered into a recital, to which Arabella listened with attentive interest. At the close, she offered to take, herself, the child for whom Jasper sought a home. She informed him of her change of name and address. The wretch promised to call that evening with the infant; but he sent the infant, and did not call. Nor did he present himself again to her eyes, until, several years afterwards, those eyes so luridly welcomed him to Podden Place. But though he did not even condescend to write to her in the meanwhile, it is probable that Arabella contrived to learn more of his habits and mode of life at Paris than she intimated when they once more met face to face.

And now the reader knows more than Alban Morley, or Guy Darrell perhaps ever will know, of the grim woman in iron grey.

CHAPTER X.

"Sweet are the uses of Adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Bears yet a precious jewel in its head."

Most persons will agree that the toad is ugly and venomous, but few indeed are the persons who can boast of having actually discovered that "precious jewel in its head," which the poet assures us is placed there. But Calamity may be classed in two great divisions—1st, The afflictions, which no prudence can avert; 2d, The misfortunes, which men take all possible pains to bring upon themselves. Afflictions of the first class may but call forth our virtues, and result in our ultimate good Such is the adversity which may give us the jewel. But to get at the jewel we must kill the toad. Misfortunes of the second class but too often increase the errors of the vices by which they were created. Such is the adversity which is all toad and no jewel. If you choose to breed and fatten your own toads, the increase of the venom absorbs every bit of the jewel.

NEVER did I know a man who was an habitual gambler, otherwise than notably inaccurate in his calculations of probabilities in the ordinary affairs of life. Is it that such a man has become so chronic a drunkard of hope, that he sees double every chance in his favor?

Jasper Losely had counted upon two things as matters of course.

1st. Darrell's speedy reconciliation with his only child.

2d. That Darrell's only child must of necessity be Darrell's heiress.

In both these expectations the gambler was deceived.

Darrell did not even answer the letters that Matilda addressed to him from France, to the shores of which Jasper had borne her, and where he had hastened to make her his wife under the assumed name of Hammond, but his true Christian name of Jasper.

In the disreputable marriage Matilda had made, all the worst parts of her character seemed suddenly revealed to her father's eye, and he saw what he had hitherto sought not to see, the true child of a worthless mother. A mere *mésalliance*, if palliated by long or familiar acquaintance with the object, however it might have galled him, his heart might have pardoned; but here, without even a struggle of duty, without the ordinary coyness of maiden pride, to be won with so scanty a wooing, by a man who she knew was betrothed to another—the dissimulation, the perfidy, the combined effrontery and meanness of the whole transaction, left no force in Darrell's eyes to the commonplace excuses of inexperience and youth. Darrell would not have been Darrell if he could have taken back to his home or his heart a daughter so old in deceit, so experienced in thoughts that dishonor.

Darrell's silence, however, little saddened the heartless bride, and little dismayed the sanguine bridegroom. Both thought that pardon and plenty were but the affair of time—a little more or little less. But their funds rapidly diminished; it became necessary to recruit them. One can't live in hotels entirely upon hope. Leaving his bride for a while in a pleasant provincial town, not many hours distant from Paris, Jasper returned to London, intent upon seeing Darrell himself; and should the father-in-law still defer articles of peace, Jasper believed that he could have no trouble in raising a present supply upon such an El Dorado of future expectations. Darrell at once consented to see Jasper, not at his own house, but at his solicitors. Smothering all opposing disgust, the proud gentleman deemed this condescension essential to the clear and definite understanding of those resolves upon which depended the worldly station and prospects of the wedded pair.

When Jasper was shown into Mr. Gotobed's office, Darrell was alone, standing near the

hearth, and by a single quiet gesture repelled that tender rush towards his breast which Jasper had elaborately prepared; and thus for the first time the two men saw each other, Darrell perhaps yet more resentfully mortified while recognizing those personal advantages in the showy profligate which had rendered a daughter of his house so facile a conquest: Jasper (who had chosen to believe that a father-in-law so eminent must necessarily be old and broken) shocked into the most disagreeable surprise by the sight of a man still young, under forty, with a countenance, a port, a presence, that in any assemblage would have attracted the general gaze from his own brilliant self, and looking altogether as unfavorable an object, whether for pathos or for post-obits, as unlikely to breathe out a blessing or to give up the ghost, as the worst brute of a father-in-law could possibly be. Nor were Darrell's words more comforting than his aspect.

"Sir, I have consented to see you, partly that you may learn from my own lips once for all that I admit no man's right to enter my family without my consent, and that consent you will never receive; and partly that, thus knowing each other by sight, each may know the man it becomes him most to avoid. The lady who is now your wife is entitled by my marriage-settlement to the reversion of a small fortune at my death; nothing more from me is she likely to inherit. As I have no desire that she to whom I once gave the name of daughter should be dependant wholly on yourself for bread, my solicitor will inform you on what conditions I am willing, during my life, to pay the interest of the sum which will pass to your wife at my death. Sir, I return to your hands the letters that lady has addressed to me, and which, it is easy to perceive, were written at your dictation. No letter from her will I answer. Across my threshold her foot will never pass. Thus, sir, concludes all possible intercouse between you and myself; what rests is between you and that gentleman."

Darrell had opened a side-door in speaking the last words—pointed towards the respectable form of Mr. Gotobed standing tall beside his tall desk—and, before Jasper could put in a word, the father-in-law was gone.

With becoming brevity Mr. Gotobed made Jasper fully aware that not only all Mr. Darrell's funded or personal property was entirely at his own disposal—that not only the large landed estates he had purchased (and which Jasper had vaguely deemed inherited and in strict entail) were in the same condition — condition enviable to the proprietor, odious to the bridegroom of the proprietors's sole daughter; but that even the fee-simple of the poor Fawley Manor-House and lands was vested in Darrell, encumbered only by the portion of £10,000 which the late Mrs. Darrell had brought to her husband, and which was settled, at the death of herself and Darrell, on the children of the marriage.

In the absence of marriage-settlements between Jasper and Matilda, that sum at Darrell's death was liable to be claimed by Jasper, in right of his wife, so as to leave no certainty that provision would remain for the support of his wife and family; and the contingent reversion might, in the mean time, be so dealt with as to bring eventual poverty on them all.

"Sir," said the lawyer, "I will be quite frank with you. It is my wish, acting for Mr. Darrell, so to settle this sum of £10,000 on your wife, and any children she may bear you, as to place it out of your power to anticipate or dispose of it, even with Mrs. Hammond's consent. If you part with that power, not at present a valuable one, you are entitled to compensation. I am prepared to make that compensation liberal. Perhaps you would prefer communicating with me through your own solicitor. But I should tell you, that the terms are more likely to be advantageous to you, in proportion as negotiation is confined to us two. It might, for instance, be expedient to tell your solicitor that your true name (I beg you a thousand pardons) is not Hammond. That is a secret which, the more you can keep it to yourself, the better I think it will be for you. We have no wish to blab it out."

Jasper, by this time, had somewhat recovered the first shock of displeasure and disappointment; and with that quickness which so erratically darted through a mind that contrived to be dull when anything honest was addressed to its apprehension, he instantly divined that his real name of Losely was worth something. He had no idea of resuming—was, indeed, at that time anxious altogether to ignore and eschew it;

but he had a right to it, and a man's rights are not to be resigned for nothing. Accordingly, he said with some asperity, "I shall resume my family name whenever I choose it. If Mr. Darrell does not like his daughter to be called Mrs. Jasper Losely—or all the malignant tittle-tattle which my poor father's unfortunate trial might provoke—he must, at least, ask me as a favor to retain the name I have temporarily adopted—a name in my family, sir. A Losely married a Hammond, I forget when—generations ago—you'll see it in the Baronetage. My grandfather, Sir Julian, was not a crack lawyer, but he was a baronet of as good birth as any in the country; and my father, sir"—(Jasper's voice trembled)—'my father," he repeated, fiercely striking his clenched hand on the table, "was a gentleman every inch of his body; and I'll pitch any man out of the window who says a word to the contrary!"

"Sir," said Mr. Gotobed, shrinking towards the bell-pull, "I think, on the whole, I had better see your solicitor."

Jasper cooled down at that suggestion; and, with a slight apology for natural excitement, begged to know what Mr. Gotobed wished to propose. To make an end of this part of the story, after two or three interviews, in which the two negotiators learned to understand each other, a settlement was legally completed, by which the sum of £10,000 was inalienably settled on Matilda, and her children by her marriage with Jasper; in case he survived her, the interest was to be his for life—in case she died childless, the capital would devolve to himself at Darrell's decease. Meanwhile, Darrell agreed to pay £500 a year, as the interest of the £10,000 at five per cent., to Jasper Hammond, or his order, provided always that Jasper and his wife continued to reside together, and fixed that residence abroad.

By a private verbal arrangement, not even committed to writing, to this sum was added another £200 a year, wholly at Darrell's option and discretion. It being clearly comprehended that these words meant so long as Mr. Hammond kept his own secret, and so long, too, as he forbore, directly or indirectly, to molest or even to address, the person at whose pleasure it was held. On the whole, the conditions to Jasper were sufficiently favorable; he came into an income immeasurably beyond his right to believe that he should ever enjoy; and sufficient—well managed—for even a fair share of the elegancies as well as comforts of life, to a young couple blest in each other's love, and remote from the horrible taxes and emulous gentilities of this opulent England, where, out of fear to be thought too poor, nobody is ever too rich.

Matilda wrote no more to Darrell. But some months afterwards he received an extremely well-expressed note in French, the writer thereof represented herself as a French lady, who had very lately seen Madame Hammond—who was now in London but for a few days, and had something to communicate, of such importance as to justify the liberty she took in requesting him to honor her with a visit. After some little hesitation, Darrell called on this lady. Though Matilda had forfeited his affection, he could not contemplate her probable fate without painful anxiety. Perhaps Jasper had ill-used her—perhaps she had need of shelter elsewhere. Though that shelter could not again be under a father's roof—and though Darrell would have taken no steps to separate her from the husband she had chosen, still, in secret, he would have felt camparative relief and ease had she herself sought to divide her fate from one whose path downwards in dishonor his penetration instinctively divined. With an idea that some communication might be made to him, to which he might reply that Matilda, if compelled to quit her husband, should never want the home and subsistence of a gentlewoman, he repaired to the house (a handsome house in a quiet street) temporarily occupied by the French lady. A tall *chasseur*, in full costume, opened the door—a page ushered him into the drawing-room.

He saw a lady—young—and with all the grace of a *Parisienne* in her manner—who, after some exquisitely-turned phrases of excuse, showed him (as a testimonial of the intimacy between herself and Madame Hammond) a letter she had received from Matilda is a very heart-broken, filial strain, full of professions of penitence—of a passionate desire for her father's forgiveness—but far from complaining of Jasper, or hinting at the idea of deserting a spouse with whom, but for the haunting remembrance of a beloved parent,

her lot would be blest indeed. Whatever of pathos was deficient in the letter, the French lady supplied by such apparent fine feeling, and by so many touching little traits of Matilda's remorse, that Darrell's heart was softened in spite of his reason. He went away, however, saying very little, and intending to call no more. But another note came. The French lady had received a letter from a mutual friend—"Matilda," she feared, "was dangerously ill." This took him again to the house, and the poor French lady seemed so agitated by the news she had heard—and yet so desirous not to exaggerate nor alarm him needlessly, that Darrell suspected his daughter was really dying, and became nervously anxious himself for the next report. Thus, about three or four visits in all necessarily followed the first one. Then Darrell abruptly closed the intercourse, and could not be induced to call again.

Not that he for an instant suspected that this amiable lady, who spoke so becomingly, and whose manners were so high-bred, was other than the well-born Baronness she called herself, and looked to be, but partly because, in the last interview, the charming *Parisienne* had appeared a little to forget Matilda's alarming illness, in a not forward but still coquettish desire to centre his attention more upon herself; and the moment she did so, he took a dislike to her which he had not before conceived; and partly because his feelings having recovered the first effect which the vision of a penitent, pining, dying daughter could not fail to produce, his experience of Matilda's duplicity and falsehood made him discredit the penitence, the pining, and the dying. The Baroness might not wilfully be deceiving him—Matilda might wilfully be deceiving the Baroness. To the next note, therefore, dispatched to him by the feeling and elegant foreigner, he replied but by a dry excuse—a stately hint that family matters could never be satisfactorily discussed except in family councils, and that if her friend's grief or illness were really in any way occasioned by a belief in the pain her choice of life might have inflicted on himself, it might comfort her to know that that pain had subsided, and that his wish for her health and happiness was not less sincere, because henceforth he could neither watch over the one nor administer to the other. To this note, after a day or two, the Baroness replied by a letter so beautifully worded, I doubt whether Madame de Sevigné could have written in purer French, or Madame de Staël with a finer felicity of phrase.

Stripped of the graces of diction, the substance was but small: "Anxiety for a friend so beloved—so unhappy—more pitied even than before, now that the Baroness had been enabled to see how fondly a daughter must idolize a father in the Man whom a nation revered !—(here two lines devoted to compliment personal)—compelled by that anxiety to quit even sooner than she had first intended the metropolis of that noble Country," etc.—(here four lines devoted to compliment national)—and then proceeding through some charming sentences about patriot altars and domestic hearths, the writer suddenly checked herself—"would intrude no more on time sublimely dedicated to the Human Race—and concluded with the assurance of sentiments the most *distinguées*." Little thought Darrell that this complimentary stranger, whom he never again beheld, would exercise an influence over that portion of his destiny which then seemed to him most secure from evil; towards which, then, he looked for the balm to every wound—the compensation to every loss !

Darrell heard no more of Matilda, till, not long aftewards, her death was announced to him. She had died from exhaustion shortly after giving birth to a female child. The news came upon him at a moment when, from other causes—(the explanation of which, forming no part of his confidence to Alban, it will be convenient to reserve)—his mind was in a state of great affliction and disorder—when he had already buried himself in the solitudes of Fawley—ambition resigned and the world renounced—and the intelligence saddened and shocked him more than it might have done some months before.

If, at that moment of utter bereavement, Matilda's child had been brought to him—given up to him to rear—would he have rejected it ? would he have forgotten that it was a felon's grandchild ? I dare not say. But his pride was not put to such a trial. One day he received a packet from Mr. Gotobed, enclosing the formal certificates of the infant's death, which had been presented to him by Jasper, who had arrived in London for that melancholy purpose, with which he combined

a pecuniary proposition. By the death of Matilda and her only child, the sum of £10,000 absolutely reverted to Jasper in the event of Darrell's decease. As the interest meanwhile was continued to Jasper, that widowed mourner suggested "that it would be a great boon to himself and no disadvantage to Darrell if the principal were made over to him at once. He had been brought up originally to commerce. He had abjured all thoughts of resuming such vocation during his wife's lifetime, out of that consideration for her family and ancient birth which motives of delicacy imposed. Now that the connection with Mr. Darrell was dissolved, it might be rather a relief than otherwise to that gentleman to know that a son-in-law so displeasing to him was finally settled, not only in a foreign land, but in a social sphere in which his very existence would soon be ignored by all who could remind Mr. Darrell that his daughter had once a husband. An occasion that might never occur again now presented itself. A trading firm at Paris, opulent, but unostentatiously quiet in its mercantile transactions, would accept him as a partner could he bring to it the additional capital of £10,000." Not without dignity did Jasper add, "that since his connection had been so unhappily distasteful to Mr. Darrell, and since the very payment, each quarter, of the interest of the sum in question must in itself keep alive the unwelcome remembrance of that connection, he had the less scruple in making a proposition which would enable the eminent personage who so disdained his alliance to get rid of him altogether." Darrell closed at once with Jasper's proposal, pleased to cut off from his life each tie that could henceforth link it to Jasper's, not displeased to relieve his hereditary acres from every shilling of the marriage portion which was imposed on it as a debt, and associated with memories of unmingled bitterness. Accordingly, Mr. Gotobed, taking care first to ascertain that the certificates as to the poor child's death were genuine, accepted Jasper's final release of all claim on Mr. Darrell's estate. There still, however, remained the £200 a-year which Jasper had received during Matilda's life, on the tacit condition of remaining Mr. Hammond, and not personally addressing Mr. Darrell. Jasper inquired "if that annuity was to continue?"

Mr. Gotobed referred the inquiry to Darrell, observing that the object for which this extra allowance had been made, was rendered nugatory by the death of Mrs. Hammond and her child; since Jasper henceforth could have neither power or pretext to molest Mr. Darrell, and that it could signify but little what name might in future be borne by one whose connection with the Darrell family was wholly dissolved. Darrell impatiently replied, "That nothing having been said as to the withdrawal of the said allowance in case Jasper became a widower, he remained equally entitled, in point of honor, to receive that allowance, or an adequate equivalent."

This answer being intimated to Jasper, that gentleman observed, "that it was no more than he had expected from Mr. Darrell's sense of honor," and apparently quite satisfied, carried himself and his £10,000 back to Paris. Not long after, however, he wrote to Mr. Gotobed that "Mr. Darrell having alluded to an equivalent for the £200 a-year allowed to him, evidently implying that it was as disagreeable to Mr. Darrell to see that sum entered quarterly in his banker's books, as it had been to see there the quarterly interest of the £10,000, so Jasper might be excused in owning that he should prefer an equivalent. The commercial firm to which he was about to attach himself required a somewhat larger capital on his part than he had anticipated, etc., etc. Without presuming to dictate any definite sum, he would observe that £1,500 or even £1,000 would be of more avail to his views and objects in life than an annuity of £200 a-year, which, being held only at will, was not susceptible of a temporary loan."

Darrell, wrapped in thoughts wholly remote from recollections of Jasper, chafed at being thus recalled to the sense of that person's existence, wrote back to the solicitor who transmitted to him this message, "that an annuity held on his word was not to be calculated by Mr. Hammond's notions of its value. That the £200 a-year should therefore be placed on the same footing as the £500 a-year that had been allowed on a capital of £10,000; that accordingly it might be held to represent a principle of £4,000, for which he enclosed a cheque, begging Mr. Gotobed not only to make Mr. Hammond fully understand that there ended all possible accounts or communi-

cation between them, but never again to trouble him with any matters whatsoever in reference to affairs that were thus finally concluded." Jasper, receiving the £4,000, left Darrell and Gotobed in peace till the following year. He then addressed to Gotobed an exceedingly plausible, business-like letter. "The firm he had entered, in the silk-trade, was in the most flourishing state — an opportunity occurred to purchase a magnificent mulberry plantation in Provence, with all requisite *magnanneries*, etc., which would yield an immense increase of profit. That if, to insure him a share in this lucrative purchase, Mr. Darrell could accommodate him for a year with a loan of £2,000 or £3,000, he sanguinely calculated on attaining so high a position in the commercial world, as, though it could not render the recollection of his alliance more obstrusive to Mr. Darrell, would render it less humiliating."

Mr. Gotobed, in obedience to the peremptory instructions he had received from his client, did not refer this letter to Darrell, but having occasion at that time to visit Paris on other business, he resolved (without calling on Mr. Hammond) to institute there some private inquiry into that rising trader's prospects and status. He found, on arrival at Paris, these inquiries difficult. No one in either the *beau monde* or in the *haut commerce* seemed to know anything about this Mr. Jasper Hammond. A few fashionable English *roués* remembered to have seen, once or twice during Matilda's life, and shortly after her decease, a very fine-looking man shooting meteoric across some equivocal *salons*, or lounging in the *Champs Elysées*, or dining ot the *Café de Paris;* but of late that meteor had vanished. Mr. Gotobed, then cautiously employing a commissioner to gain some information of Mr. Hammond's firm at the private residence from which Jasper addressed his letter, ascertained that in that private residence Jasper did not reside. He paid the porter to receive occasional letters, for which he called or sent; and the porter, who was evidently a faithful and discreet functionary, declared his belief that Monsieur Hammond lodged in the house in which he transacted business, though where was the house or what was the business, the porter observed, with well-bred implied rebuke, "Monsieur Hammond was too reserved to communicate, he himself too incurious to inquire."

At length, Mr. Gotobed's business, which was, in fact, a commission from a distressed father to extricate an imprudent son, a mere boy, from some unhappy associations, having brought him into the necessity of seeing persons who belonged neither to the *beau monde* nor to the *haut commerce*, he gleaned from them the information he desired. Mr. Hammond lived in the very heart of a certain circle in Paris, which but few Englishmen ever penetrate. In that circle Mr. Hammond had, on receiving his late wife's dowry, become the partner in a private gambling hell; in that hell had been engulfed all the monies he had received—a hell that ought to have prospered with him, if he could have economized his villanous gains. His senior partner in that firm retired into the country with a fine fortune —no doubt the very owner of those mulberry plantations which were now on sale! But Jasper scattered napoleons faster than any *croupier* could rake them away. And Jasper's natural talent for converting solid gold into thin air had been assisted by a lady, who, in the course of her amiable life, had assisted many richer men than Jasper to lodging in *St. Pelagie*, or cells in the *Maison des Fous*. With that lady he had become acquainted during the lifetime of his wife, and it was supposed that Matilda's discovery of this *liaison* had contributed perhaps to the illness which closed in her decease; the name of that lady was Gabrielle Desmarets.

She might still be seen daily at the Bois de Boulogne, nightly at opera-house or theatre; *she* had apartments in the Chausée d'Antin far from inaccessible to Mr. Gotobed, if he coveted the honor of her acquaintance. But Jasper was less before an admiring world. He was supposed now to be connected with another gambling-house of lower grade than the last, in which he had contrived to break his own bank and plunder his own till. It was supposed also that he remained good friends with Mademoiselle Desmarets; but if he visited her at her house, he was never to be seen there. In fact, his temper was so uncertain, his courage so dauntless, his strength so prodigious, that gentlemen who did not wish to be thrown out of a window, or hurled down a staircase, shunned any salon or boudoir in which they had

a chance to encounter him. Mademoiselle Desmarets had thus been condemned to the painful choice between his society and that of nobody else, or that of anybody else with the rigid privation of his. Not being a turtle-dove, she had chosen the latter alternative. It was believed, nevertheless, that if Gabrielle Desmarets had known the weakness of a kind sentiment, it was for this turbulent lady-killer; and that, with a liberality she had never exhibited in any other instance, when she could no longer help him to squander, she would still, at a pinch, help him to live; though, of course, in such a reverse of the normal laws of her being, Mademoiselle Desmarets set those bounds on her own generosity which she would not have imposed upon his, and had said with a sigh, "I could forgive him if he beat me and beggared my friend! but to beat my friends and beggar me,—*that* is not the kind of love which makes the world go **round**!"

Scandalized to the last nerve of his respectable system by the information thus gleaned, Mr. Gotobed returned to London. More letters from Jasper—becoming urgent, and at last even insolent—Mr. Gotobed, worried into a reply, wrote back shortly, "that he could not even communicate such applications to Mr. Darrell, and that he must peremptorily decline all further intercourse, epistolary or personal, with Mr. Hammond."

Darrell, on returning from one of the occasional rambles on the Continent, "remote, unfriended, melancholy," by which he broke the monotony of his Fawley life, found a letter from Jasper, not fawning, but abrupt, addressed to himself, complaining of Mr. Gotobed's improper tone, requesting pecuniary assistance, and intimating that he could in return communicate to Mr. Darrell an intelligence that would give him more joy than all his wealth could purchase. Darrell enclosed that note to Mr. Gotobed; Mr. Gotobed came down to Fawley to make those revelations of Jasper's mode of life which were too delicate—or too much the reverse of delicate—to commit to paper. Great as Darrell's disgust at the memory of Jasper had hitherto been, it may well be conceived how much more bitter became that memory now. No answer was, of course, vouchsafed to Jasper, who, after another extremely forcible appeal for money, and equally enigmatical boast of the pleasurable information it was in his power to bestow, relapsed into sullen silence.

One day, somewhat more than five years after Matilda's death, Darrell, coming in from his musing walks, found a stranger waiting for him. This stranger was William Losely, returned from penal exile; and while Darrell, on hearing this announcement, stood mute with haughty wonder that such a visitor could cross the threshold of his father's house, the convict began what seemed to Darrell a story equally audacious and incomprehensible—the infant Matilda had borne to Jasper, and the certificates of whose death had been so ceremoniously produced and so prudently attested, lived still! Sent out to nurse as soon as born, the nurse had in her charge another babe, and this last was the child who had died and been buried as Matilda Hammond's. The elder Losely went on to stammer out a hope that his son was not at the time aware of the fradulent exchange, but had been deceived by the nurse—that it had not been a premeditated imposture of his own to obtain his wife's fortune.

When Darrell came to this part of his story, Alban Morley's face grew more seriously interested. "Stop!" he said; "William Losely assured you of his own conviction that this strange tale was true. What proofs did he volunteer?"

"Proofs! Death, man, do you think that at such moments I was but a bloodless lawyer, to question and cross-examine? I could but bid the impostor leave the house which his feet polluted."

Alban heaved a sigh, and murmured, too low for Darrell to overhear, "Poor Willy!" then aloud, "But, my dear friend, bear with me one moment. Suppose that, by the arts of this diabolical Jasper, the exchange really had been effected, and a child to your ancient line lived still, would it not be a solace, a comfort—"

"Comfort!" cried Darrell, "comfort in the perpetuation of infamy! The line I promised my father to restore to its rank in the land, to be renewed in the grandchild of a felon!—in the child of the yet viler sharper of a hell!—You, gentleman and soldier, call that thought—'comfort!' O Alban!—out on you! Fie! fie! No!—leave such a thought to the lips of a William Losely!

He indeed, clasping his hands, faltered forth some such word; he seemed to count on my forlorn privation of kith and kindred—no heir to my wealth—no representative of my race—would I deprive myself of—ay—your very words—of a solace—a comfort! He asked me, at least, to inquire."

"And you answered?"

"Answered so as to quell and crush in the bud all hopes in the success of so flagrant a falsehood—answered, 'Why inquire? Know that, even if your tale were true, I have no heir, no representative, no descendant in the child of Jasper—the grandchild of William—Losely. I can at least leave my wealth to the son of Charles Haughton. True, Charles Haughton was a spendthrift, a gamester; but he was neither a professional cheat nor a convicted felon.'"

"You said that—O Darrell!"

The Colonel checked himself. But for Charles Haughton, the spendthrift and gamester, would William Losely have been the convicted felon? He checked that thought, and hurried on—"And how did William Losely reply?"

"He made no reply—he skulked away without a word."

Darrell then proceeded to relate the interview which Jasper had forced on him at Fawley during Lionel's visit there—on Jasper's part an attempt to tell the same tale as William had told—on Darrell's part, the same scornful refusal to hear it out. "And," added Darrell, "the man, finding it thus impossible to dupe my reason, had the inconceivable meanness to apply to me for alms. I could not better show the disdain in which I held himself and his story than in recognizing his plea as a mendicant. I threw my purse at his feet, and so left him."

"But," continued Darrell, his brow growing darker and darker—"but wild and monstrous as the story was, still the idea that it MIGHT be true—a supposition which derived its sole strength from the character of Jasper Losely—from the interest he had in the supposed death of a child that alone stood between himself and the money he longed to grasp—an interest which ceased when the money itself was gone, or rather changed into the counter-interest of proving a life that, he thought, would re-establish a hold on me—still, I say, an idea that the story *might* be true, would force itself on my fears, and if so, though my resolution never to acknowledge the child of Jasper Losely as a representative, or even as a daughter, of my house, would of course be immovable—yet it would become my duty to see that her infancy was sheltered, her childood reared, her youth guarded, her existence amply provided for."

"Right—your plain duty," said Alban bluntly. "Intricate sometimes are the obligations imposed on us as gentlemen; '*noblesse oblige*" is a motto which involves puzzles for a casuist; but our duties as men are plain—the idea very properly haunted you—and—"

"And I hastened to exorcise the spectre. I left England—I went to the French town in which poor Matilda died—I could not, of course, make formal or avowed inquiries of a nature to raise into importance the very conspiracy (if conspiracy there were) which threatened me. But I saw the physician who had attended both my daughter and her child—I sought those who had seen them both when living—seen them both when dead. The doubt on my mind was dispelled—not a pretext left for my own self-torment. The only person needful in evidence whom I failed to see was the nurse to whom the infant had been sent. She lived in a village some miles from the town—I called at her house—she was out. I left word I should call the next day—I did so—she had absconded. I might, doubtless, have traced her, but to what end if she were merely Jasper's minion and tool? Did not her very flight prove her guilt and her terror? Indirectly, I inquired into her antecedents and character. The inquiry opened a field of conjecture, from which I hastened to turn my eyes. This woman had a sister who had been in the service of Gabrielle Desmarets, and Gabrielle Desmarets had been in the neighborhood during my poor daughter's lifetime, and just after my daughter's death.

"And the nurse had had two infants under her charge; the nurse had removed with one of them to Paris—and Gabrielle Desmarets lived in Paris—and, O Alban, if there be really in flesh and life a child by Jasper Losely to be forced upon my purse or my pity—is it his child, not by the ill-fated Matilda, but by the vile woman for whom Matilda, even in the first year of wedlock, was deserted? Conceive how

credulity itself would shrink appalled from the horrible snare !—I to acknowledge, adopt, proclaim as the last of the Darrells, the adulterous offspring of a Jasper Losely and a Gabrielle Desmarets !—or, when I am in my grave, some claim advanced upon the sum settled by my marriage articles on Matilda's issue, and which, if a child survived, could not have been legally transferred to its father—a claim with witnesses suborned—a claim that might be fraudently established—a claim that would leave the representative—not indeed of my lands and wealth, but, more precious far, of my lineage and blood—in—in the person of—of—"

Darrell paused, almost stifling, and became so pale that Alban started from his seat in alarm.

"It is nothing," resumed Darrell, faintly, "And, ill or well, I must finish this subject now, so that we need not reopen it."

"I remained abroad, as you know, for some years. During that time two or three letters from Jasper Losely were forwarded to me; the latest in date more insolent than all preceding ones. It contained demands as if they were rights, and insinuated threats of public exposure, reflecting on myself and my pride—'He was my son-in-law after all, and if he came to disgrace, the world should know the tie.' Enough. This is all I knew until the man who now, it seems, thrust himself forward as Jasper Losely's friend or agent, spoke to me the other night at Mrs. Haughton's. That man you have seen, and you say that he—"

"Represents Jasper's poverty as extreme; his temper unscrupulous and desperate; that he is capable of any amount of scandal or violence. It seems that though at Paris he has (Poole believes) still preserved the name of Hammond, yet that in England he has resumed that of Losely; and seems by Poole's date of the time at which he, Poole, made Jasper's acquaintance, to have done so after his baffled attempt on you at Fawley—whether in so doing he intimated the commencement of hostilities, or whether, as is more likely, the sharper finds it convenient to have one name in one country, and one in another, 'tis useless to inquire; enough that the identity between the Hammond who married poor Matilda, and the Jasper Losely whose father was transported, that unscrupulous rogue has no longer any care to conceal. It is true that the revelation of this identity would now be of slight moment to a man of the world—as thick skinned as myself, for instance; but to you it would be disagreeable—there is no denying that—and therefore, in short, when Mr. Poole advises a compromise, by which Jasper could be secured from want and yourself from annoyance, I am of the same opinion as Mr. Poole is."

"You are ?"

"Certainly. My dear Darrell, if in your secret heart there was something so galling in the thought that the man who had married your daughter, though without your consent, was not merely the common-place adventurer whom the world supposed, but the son of that poor dear—I mean that rascal who was transported, Jasper, too, himself a cheat and a sharper—if this galled you so, that you have concealed the true facts from myself, your oldest friend, till this day—if it has cost you even now so sharp a pang to divulge the true name of that Mr. Hammond, whom our society never saw, whom even gossip has forgotten in connection with yourself—how intolerable would be your suffering to have this man watching for you in the streets, some wretched girl in his hand, and crying out, 'A penny for your son-in-law and your grandchild !' Pardon me—I must be blunt. You can give him to the police—send him to the treadmill. Does that mend the matter ? Or, worse still, suppose the man commits some crime that fills all the newspapers with his life and adventures, including, of course, his runaway marriage with the famous Guy Darrell's heiress—no one would blame you, no one respect you less; but do not tell me that you would not be glad to save your daughter's name from being coupled with such a miscreant's at the price of half your fortune."

"Alban," said Darrell, gloomily, "you can say nothing on this score that has not been considered by myself. But the man has so placed the matter, that honor itself forbids me to bargain with him for the price of my name. So long as he threatens, I cannot buy off a threat; so long as he persists in a story by which he would establish a claim on me on behalf of a child whom I have every motive as well as every reason to disown as inheriting my blood—whatever I bestowed on himself

would seem like hush-money to suppress that claim."

"Of course—I understand, and entirely agree with you. But if the man retract all threats, confess his imposture in respect to this pretended offspring, and consent to retire for life to a distant colony, upon an annuity that may suffice for his wants, but leave no surplus beyond, to render more glaring his vices, or more effective his powers of evil—if this could be arranged between Mr. Poole and myself, I think that your peace might be permanently secured without the slightest sacrifice of honor. Will you leave the matter in my hands on this assurance—that I will not give this person a farthing except on the conditions I have promised?"

"On these conditions, yes, and most gratefully," said Darrell. "Do what you will; but one favor more: never again speak to me (unless absolutely compelled) in reference to this dark portion of my inner life."

Alban pressed his friend's hand, and both were silent for some moments. Then said the Colonel, with an attempt at cheerfulness, "Darrell, more than ever how do I see that the new house at Fawley, so long suspended, must be finished. Marry again you must!—you can never banish old remembrances unless you can supplant them by fresh hopes."

"I feel it—I know it," cried Darrell, passionately. "And oh! if one remembrance *could* be wrenched away! But it shall—it shall!"

"Ah!" thought Alban—"the remembrance of his former conjugal life!—a remembrance which might well make the youngest and the boldest Benedict shrink from the hazard of a similar experiment."

In proportion to the delicacy, the earnestness, the depth of a man's nature, will there be a something in his character which no male friend can conceive, and a something in the secrets of his life which no male friend can ever conjecture.

CHAPTER XI.

Our old friend the Pocket-Cannibal evinces unexpected patriotism and philosophical moderation, contented with a steak off his own succulent friend in the airs of his own native sky.

Colonel Morley had a second interview with Mr. Poole. It needed not Alban's knowledge of the world to discover that Poole was no partial friend to Jasper Losely; that, for some reason or other, Poole was no less anxious than the Colonel to get that formidable client, whose cause he so warmly advocatad, pensioned and packed off into the region most remote from Great Britain, in which a spirit hitherto so restless might consent to settle. And although Mr. Poole had evidently taken offence at Mr. Darrell's discourteous rebuff of his amiable intentions, yet no grudge against Darrell furnished a motive for conduct equal to his Christian desire that Darrell's peace should be purchased by Losely's perpetual exile. Accordingly Colonel Morley took leave, with a well-placed confidence in Poole's determination to do all in his power to induce Jasper to listen to reason. The Colonel had hoped to learn something from Poole of the elder Losely's present residence and resources. Poole, as we know, could give him there no information. The Colonel also failed to ascertain any particulars relative to that female pretender on whose behalf Jasper founded his principal claim to Darrell's aid. And so great was Poole's embarrassment in reply to all questions on that score—Where was the young person? With whom had she lived? What was she like? Could the Colonel see her, and hear her own tale?—that Alban entertained a strong suspicion that no such girl was in existence; that she was a pure fiction and myth; or that, if Jasper were compelled to produce some petticoated fair, she would be an artful baggage hired for the occasion.

Poole waited Jasper's next visit with impatience and sanguine delight. He had not a doubt that the ruffian would cheerfully consent to allow that, on farther inquiry, he had found he had been deceived in his belief of Sophy's parentage, and that there was nothing in England so peculiarly sacred to his heart, but what he might consent to breathe the freer air of Columbian skies, or even to share the shepherd's harmless life amidst the pastures of auriferous Australia! But, to Poole's ineffable consternation, Jasper declared sullenly that he would not consent to expatriate himself merely for the sake of living.

"I am not so young as I was," said the bravo; "I don't speak of years, but feeling. I have not the same energy; once I had high

spirits—they are broken: once I had hope—I have none: I am not up to exertion; I have got into lazy habits. To go into new scenes, form new plans, live in a horrid raw new world, everybody round me bustling and pushing—No! that may suit your thin dapper light Hop-o'-my-thumbs! Look at me! See how I have increased in weight the last five years—all solid bone and muscle. I defy any four draymen to move me an inch if I am not in the mind to it; and to be blown off to the antipodes as if I were the down of a pestilent thistle, I am not in the mind for *that*, Dolly Poole!"

"Hum!" said Poole, trying to smile. "This is funny talk. You always were a funny fellow. But I am quite sure, from Colonel Morley's decided manner, that you can get nothing from Darrell if you choose to remain in England.

"Well, when I have nothing else left, I may go to Darrell myself, and have that matter out with him. At present I am not up to it. Dolly, don't bore!" And the bravo, opening a jaw strong enough for any carnivorous animal yawned—yawned much as a bored tiger does in the face of a philosophical student of savage manners in the Zoological Gardens.

"Bore!" said Poole, astounded, and recoiling from that expanded jaw. "But I should have thought no subject could bore you less than the consideration of how you are to live?"

"Why, Dolly, I have learned to be easily contented, and you see at present I live upon you."

"Yes," groaned Poole, "but that can't go on for ever; and, besides, you promised that you would leave me in peace as soon as I had got Darrell to provide for you."

"So I will. Zounds, sir, do you doubt my word? So I will. But I don't call exile 'a provision'—*Besta!* I understand from you that Colonel Morley offers to restore the niggardly £200 a-year Darrell formerly allowed to me, to be paid monthly or weekly, through some agent in Van Diemen's Land, or some such uncomfortable half-way house to Eternity, that was not even in the Atlas when I studied geography at school. But £200 a-year is exactly my income in England, paid weekly too, by your agreeable self, with whom it is a pleasure to talk over old times. Therefore that proposal is out of the question. Tell Colonel Morley, with my compliments, that if he will double the sum, and leave me to spend it where I please, I scorn haggling, and say 'done.'

"And as to the girl, since I cannot find her (which, on penalty of being threshed to a mummy, you will take care not to let out), I would agree to leave Mr. Darrell free to disown her. But are you such a dolt as not to see that I put the ace of trumps on my adversary's pitiful deuce, if I depose that my own child is not my own child, when all I get for it is what I equally get out of you, with my ace of trumps still in my hands? *Basta!*—I say again *Basta!* It is evidently an object to Darrell to get rid of all fear that Sophy should ever pounce upon him tooth and claw: if he be so convinced that she is not his daughter's child, why make a point of my saying that I told him a fib, when I said she was? Evidently, too, he is afraid of my power to harass and annoy him; or why make it a point that I shall only nibble his cheese in a trap at the world's end, stared at by bushmen, and wombats, and rattlesnakes, and alligators, and other American citizens or British settlers! £200 a-year, and my wife's father a millionaire! The offer is an insult. Ponder this: put on the screw; make them come to terms which I can do them the honor to accept; meanwhile I will trouble you for my four sovereigns."

Poole had the chagrin to report to the Colonel, Jasper's refusal of the terms proposed, and to state the counter-proposition he was commisioned to make. Alban was at first surprised, not conjecturing the means of supply, in his native land, which Jasper had secured in the coffers of Poole himself. On sounding the unhappy negotiator as to Jasper's reasons, he surmised, however, one part of the truth—viz., that Jasper built hopes of better terms precisely on the fact that terms had been offered to him at all; and this induced Alban almost to regret that he had made any such overtures, and to believe that Darrell's repugnance to open the door of conciliation a single inch to so sturdy a mendicant, was more worldly-wise than Alban had originally supposed. Yet partly, even for Darrell's own security and peace, from that persuasion of his own powers of management which a consummate man of the world is apt to entertain,

and partly from a strong curiosity to see the audacious son of that poor dear rascal Willy, and examine himself into the facts he asserted, and the objects he aimed at, Alban bade Poole inform Jasper that Colonel Morley would be quite willing to convince him, in a personal interview, of the impossibility of acceding to the propositions Jasper had made; and that he should be still more willing to see the young person whom Jasper asserted to be child of his marriage.

Jasper, after a moment's moody deliberation, declined to meet Colonel Morley—actuated to some extent in that refusal by the sensitive vanity which once had given him delight, and now only gave him pain. Meet thus—altered, fallen, imbruted—the fine gentleman whose calm eye had quelled him in the widow's drawing-room in his day of comparative splendor—that in itself was distasteful to the degenerated bravo. But he felt as if he should be at more disadvantage in point of argument with a cool and wary representative of Darrell's interests, than he should be even with Darrell himself. And unable to produce the child whom he arrogated the right to obtrude, he should be but exposed to a fire of cross questions without a shot in his own locker. Accordingly he declined, point-blank, to see Colonel Morley; and declared that the terms he himself had proposed were the lowest he would accept. "Tell Colonel Morley, however, that if negotiations fail, *I* shall not fail, sooner or later, to argue my view of the points in dispute with my kind father-in-law, and in person."

"Yes, hang it!" cried Poole, exasperated; "go and see Darrell yourself. He is easily found."

"Ay," answered Jasper, with the hardest look of his downcast sidelong eye—"Ay; some day or other it may come to that. I would rather not, if possible. I might not keep my temper. It is not merely a matter of money between us, if we two meet. There are affronts to efface. Banished his house like a mangy dog—treated by a jackanapes lawyer like the dirt in the kennel! The Loselys, I suspect, would have looked down on the Darrells fifty years ago; and what if my father was born out of wedlock, is the blood not the same? Does the breed dwindle down for want of a gold ring and priest? Look at me. No; not what I now am; not even as you saw me five years ago; but as I leapt into youth! Was I born to cast sums and nib pens as a City clerk? Aha, my poor father, you were wrong there! Blood will out! Mad devil, indeed, is a racer in a citizen's gig! Spavined, and wind-galled, and foundered—let the brute go at last to the knackers; but by his eye, and his pluck, and his bone, the brute shows the stock that he came from!"

Dolly opened his eyes and—blinked. Never in his gaudy days had Jasper half so openly revealed what, perhaps, had been always a sore in his pride; and his outburst now may possibly aid the reader to a subtler comprehension of the arrogance, and levity, and egotism, which accompanied his insensibility to honor, and had converted his very claim to the blood of a gentleman into an excuse for a cynic's disdain of the very virtues for which a gentleman is most desirous of obtaining credit. But by a very ordinary process in the human mind, as Jasper had fallen lower and lower into the lees and dregs of fortune, his pride had more prominently emerged from the group of the other and gaudier vices, by which, in health and high spirits, it had been pushed aside and outshone.

"Humph!" said Poole, after a pause. "If Darrell was as uncivil to you as he was to me, I don't wonder that you owe him a grudge. But even if you do lose temper in seeing him, it might rather do good than not. You can make yourself cursedly unpleasant if you chose it; and perhaps you will have a better chance of getting your own terms if they see you can bite as well as bark! Set at Darrell, and worry him; it is not fair to worry nobody but me!"

"Dolly, don't bluster! If I could stand at his door, or stop him in the streets, with the girl in my hand, your advice would be judicious. The world would not care for a row between a rich man and a penniless son-in-law. But an interesting young lady, who calls him grandfather, and falls at his knees,—he could not send *her* to hard labor; and if he does not believe in her birth, let the thing but just get into the newspapers, and there are plenty who will; and I should be in a very different position for treating. 'Tis just because, if I meet Darrell again, I don't wish that again it should be all bark and no bite, that I postpone the in-

terview. All your own laziness—exert yourself and find the girl."

"But I can't find the girl, and you know it. And I tell you what, Mr. Losely, Colonel Morley, who is a very shrewd man, does not believe in the girl's existence."

"Does not he! I begin to doubt it myself. But, at all events, you can't doubt of mine, and I am grateful for yours; and since you have given me the trouble of coming here to no purpose, I may as well take the next week's pay in advance—four sovereigns, if you please, Dolly Poole."

CHAPTER XII.

Another halt—Change of Horses—and a turn on the road.

Colonel Morley, on learning that Jasper declined a personal conference with himself, and that the proposal of an interview with Jasper's alleged daughter was equally scouted or put aside, became still more confirmed in his belief that Jasper had not yet been blest with a daughter sufficiently artful to produce. And pleased to think that the sharper was thus unprovided with a means of annoyance, which, skilfully managed, might have been seriously harassing; and convinced that when Jasper found no farther notice taken of him, he himself would be compelled to petition for the terms he now rejected, the Colonel dryly informed Poole "that his interference was at an end; that if Mr. Losely either through himself, or through Mr. Poole, or any one else, presumed to address Mr. Darrell direct, the offer previously made would be peremptorily and irrevocably withdrawn. I myself," added the Colonel, "shall be going abroad very shortly for the rest of the summer; and should Mr. Losely, in the meanwhile, think better of a proposal which secures him from want, I refer him to Mr. Darrell's solicitor. To that proposal, according to your account of his destitution, he must come sooner or later; and I am glad to see that he has in yourself so judicious an adviser"—a compliment which by no means consoled the miserable Poole.

In the briefest words, Alban informed Darrell of his persuasion that Jasper was not only without evidence to support a daughter's claim, but that the daughter herself was still in that part of Virgil's Hades appropriated to souls that have not yet appeared upon the upper earth; and that Jasper himself, although holding back, as might be naturally expected, in the hope of conditions more to his taste, had only to be left quietly to his own meditations in order to recognize the advantages of emigration. Another £100 a-year or so, it is true, he might bargain for, and such a demand might be worth conceding. But, on the whole, Alban congratulated Darrell upon the probability of hearing very little more of the son-in-law, and no more at all of the son-in-law's daughter.

Darrell made no comment nor reply. A grateful look, a warm pressure of the hand, and, when the subject was changed, a clearer brow and livelier smile, thanked the English Alban better than all words.

CHAPTER XIII.

Coloney Morley shows that it is not without reason that he enjoys his reputation of knowing something about everybody.

"Well met," said Darrell, the day after Alban had conveyed to him the comforting assurances which had taken one thorn from his side—dispersed one cloud in his evening sky. "Well met," said Darrell, encountering the Colonel a few paces from his own door. "Pray walk with me as far as the New Road. I have promised Lionel to visit the studio of an artist friend of his, in whom he chooses to find a Raffaele, and in whom I suppose, at the price of truth, I shall be urbanely compelled to compliment a dauber."

"Do you speak of Frank Vance?"

"The same."

"You could not visit a worthier man, nor compliment a more promising artist. Vance is one of the few who unite *gusto* and patience, fancy and brushwork. His female heads, in especial, are exquisite, though they are all, I confess, too much like one another. The man himself is a thoroughly fine fellow. He has been much made of in good society, and remains unspoiled. You will find his manner rather offhand, the reverse of shy; partly, perhaps, because he has in himself the racy fresh-

ness and boldness which he gives to his colors; partly, perhaps, also, because he has in his art the self-esteem that patricians take from their pedigree, and shakes a duke by the hand to prevent the duke holding out to him a finger."

"Good," said Darrell, with his rare, manly laugh. "Being shy myself I like men who meet one half-way. I see that we shall be at our ease with each other."

"And perhaps still more when I tell you that he is connected with an old Eton friend of ours, and deriving no great benefit from that connection; you remember poor Sidney Branthwaite?"

"To be sure. He and I were great friends at Eton—somewhat in the same position of pride and poverty. Of all the boys in the school we two had the least pocket-money. Poor Branthwaite! I lost sight of him afterwards. He went into the Church, got only a curacy, and died young."

"And left a son, poorer than himself, who married Frank Vance's sister."

"You don't say so. The Branthwaites were of good old family; what is Mr. Vance's?"

"Respectable enough. Vance's father was one of those clever man who have too many strings to their bow. He, too, was a painter; but he was also a man of letters, in a sort of a way—had a share in a journal, in which he wrote Criticisms on the Fine Arts. A musical composer, too. Rather a fine gentleman, I suspect, with a wife who was rather a fine lady. Their house was much frequented by artists and literary men: old Vance, in short, was hospitable—his wife extravagant. Believing that posterity would do that justice to his pictures which his contemporaries refused, Vance left to his family no other provision. After selling his pictures, and paying his debts, there was just enough left to bury him. Fortunately, Sir ——, the great painter of that day, had already conceived a liking to Frank Vance—then a mere boy—who had shown genius from an infant, as all true artists do. Sir —— took him into his studio, and gave him lessons. It would have been unlike Sir ——, who was open-hearted but close-fisted, to give anything else. But the boy contrived to support his mother and sister. That fellow, who is now as arrogant a stickler for the dignity of art as you or my Lord Chancellor may be for that of the bar, stooped then to deal clandestinely with fancy shops, and imitate Watteau on fans. I have two hand-screens that he painted for a shop in Rathbone Place. I suppose he may have got 10s. for them, and now any admirer of Frank's would give £100 a piece for them."

"That is the true soul in which genius lodges, and out of which fire springs," cried Darrell, cordially. "Give me the fire that lurks in the flint, and answers by light the stroke of the hard steel. I'm glad Lionel has won a friend in such a man. Sidney Branthwaite's son married Vance's sister—after Vance had won reputation?"

"No; while Vance was still a boy. Young Arthur Branthwaite was an orphan. If he had any living relations, they were too poor to assist him. He wrote poetry much praised by the critics (they deserve to be hanged, those critics!)—scribbled, I suppose, in old Vance's journal; saw Mary Vance a little before her father died; fell in love with her; and on the strength of a volume of verse, in which the critics all solemnly deposed to his surpassing riches—of imagination, rushed to the altar, and sacrificed a wife to the Muses! Those villanous critics will have a dark account to render in the next world! Poor Arthur Branthwaite! For the sake of our old friend his father, I bought a copy of his little volume. Little as the volume was, I could not read it through."

"What!—below contempt?"

"On the contrary, above comprehension! All poetry praised by critics nowadays is as hard to understand as a hieroglyphic. I own a weakness for Pope and common sense. I could keep up with our age as far as Byron; after him I was thrown out. However, Arthur was declared by the critics to be a great improvement on Byron—more 'poetical in form'—more 'æsthetically artistic'—more 'objective' or 'subjective' (I am sure I forget which, but it was one or the other, nonsensical, and not English) in his views of man and nature. Very possibly. All I know is—I bought the poems, but could not read them; the critics read them, but did not buy. All that Frank Vance could make by painting hand-screens and fans and album-scraps, he sent, I believe, to the poor poet; but I fear it did not suffice. Arthur, I suspect, must have been publishing another volume on his own account. I saw a Monody on something or other, by Arthur

Branthwaite, advertised, and no doubt Frank's fans and hand-screens must have melted into the printer's bill. But the Monody never appeared: the poet died, his young wife too. Frank Vance remains a bachelor, and sneers at gentility—abhors poets—is insulted if you promise posthumous fame—gets the best price he can for his pictures—and is proud to be thought a miser. Here we are at his door."

CHAPTER XIV.

Romantic Love pathologically regarded by Frank Vance and Alban Morley.

VANCE was before his easel, Lionel looking over his shoulder. Never was Darrell more genial than he was that day to Frank Vance. The two men took to each other at once, and talked as familiarly as if the retired lawyer and the rising painter were old fellow-travellers along the same road of life. Darrell was really an exquisite judge of art, and his praise was the more gratifying because discriminating. Of course he gave the due meed of panegyric to the female heads, by which the artist had become so renowned. Lionel took his kinsman aside, and, with a mournful expression of face, showed him the portrait by which all those varying ideals had been suggested—the portrait of Sophy as Titania.

"And that is Lionel," said the artist, pointing to the rough outline of Bottom.

"Pish!" said Lionel, angrily. Then turning to Darrell—"This is *the* Sophy we have failed to find, sir—is it not a lovely face?"

"It is indeed," said Darrell. "But that nameless refinement in expression—that arch yet tender elegance in the simple, watchful attitude—these, Mr. Vance, must be your additions to the original."

"No, I assure you, sir," said Lionel: "besides that elegance, that refinement, there was a delicacy in the look and air of that child, to which Vance failed to do justice. Own it, Frank."

"Reassure yourself, Mr. Darrell," said Vance, "of any fears which Lionel's enthusiasm might excite. He tells me that Titania is in America; yet, after all, I would rather he saw her again—no cure for love at first sight like a second sight of the beloved object after a long absence."

DARRELL (somewhat gravely).—"A hazardous remedy—it might kill, if it did not cure."

COLONEL MORLEY.—"I suspect, from Vance's manner, that he has tested its efficacy on his own person."

LIONEL.—"No, *mon Colonel*—I'll answer for Vance. *He* in love! Never."

Vance colored—gave a touch to the nose of a Roman senator in the famous classical picture which he was then painting for a merchant at Manchester—and made no reply. Darrell looked at the artist with a sharp and searching glance.

COLONEL MORLEY.—"Then all the more credit to Vance for his intuitive perception of philosophical truth. Suppose, my dear Lionel, that we light, one idle day, on a beautiful novel, a glowing romance—suppose that, by chance, we are torn from the book in the middle of the interest—we remain under the spell of the illusion—we recall the scenes—we try to guess what should have been the sequel—we think that no romance ever was so captivating, simply because we were not allowed to conclude it. Well, if some years afterwards, the romance fall again in our way, and we open at the page where we left off, we cry, in maturity of our sober judgment, 'Mawkish stuff!—is this the same thing that I once thought so beautiful?—how one's tastes do alter!'"

DARRELL.—"Does it not depend on the age in which one began the romance?"

LIONEL.—"Rather, let me think, sir, upon the real depth of the interest—the true beauty of the—"

VANCE (interrupting).—"Heroine? Not at all, Lionel. I once fell in love—incredible as it may seem to you—nine years ago last January. I was too poor then to aspire to any young lady's hand—therefore I did not tell my love, but 'let concealment,' et cetera, et cetera. She went away with her mamma to complete her education on the Continent. I remained 'Patience on a monument.' She was always before my eyes—the slenderest, shyest creature—just eighteen. I never had an idea that she could grow any older, less slender, or less shy. Well, four years afterwards (just before we made our excursion into Surrey, Lionel), she returned to England, still unmarried. I went to a party at which I knew she was to be—saw her, and was cured."

"Bad case of smallpox, or what?" asked the Colonel, smiling.

VANCE.—"Nay; everybody said she was extremely improved—that was the mischief—she had improved herself out of my fancy. I had been faithful as wax to one settled impression, and when I saw a fine, full-formed, young Frenchified lady, quite at her ease, armed with eye-glass and bouquet and bustle, away went my dream of the slim blushing maiden. The Colonel is quite right, Lionel; the romance once suspended, 'tis a haunting remembrance till thrown again in our way, but complete dis-illusion if we try to renew it; though I swear that in my case the interest was deep, and the heroine improved in her beauty. So with you and that dear little creature. See her again, and you'll tease me no more to give you that portrait of Titania at watch over Bottom's soft slumbers. All a Midsummer Night's Dream, Lionel. Titania fades back into the arms of Oberon, and would not be Titania if you could make her—Mrs. Bottom."

CHAPTER XV.

Even Colonel Morley, knowing everybody and everything, is puzzled when it comes to the plain question —"What will he do with it?"

"I AM delighted with Vance," said Darrell, when he and the Colonel were again walking arm-in-arm. "His is not one of those meagre intellects which have nothing to spare out of the professional line. He has humor. Humor —strength's rich superfluity."

"I like your definition," said the Colonel. "And humor in Vance, though fantastic, is not without subtlety. There was much real kindness in his obvious design to quiz Lionel out of that silly enthusiasm for—"

"For a pretty child, reared up to be a strolling player," interrupted Darrell. "Don't call it silly enthusiasm. I call it chivalrous compassion. Were it other than compassion, it would not be enthusiasm—it would be degradation. But do you believe, then, that Vance's confession of first love, and its cure, was but a whimsical invention?"

COLONEL MORLEY.—"Not so. Many a grave truth is spoken jestingly. I have no doubt that, allowing for the pardonable exaggeration of a *raconteur*, Vance was narrating an episode in his own life."

DARRELL.—"Do you think that a grown man, who has ever really felt love, can make a jest of it, and to mere acquaintances?"

COLONEL MORLEY.—"Yes; if he be so thoroughly cured that he has made a jest of it to himself. And the more lightly he speaks of it, perhaps the more solenmly at one time he felt it. Levity is his revenge on the passion that fooled him."

DARRELL.—"You are evidently an experienced philosopher in the lore of such folly. '*Consultus insapientis sapientiæ.*' Yet I can scarcely believe that you have ever been in love."

"Yes, I have," said the Colonel bluntly, "and very often! Everybody at my age has —except yourself. So like a man's observation, *that*," continued the Colonel with much tartness. "No man ever thinks another man capable of a profound and romantic sentiment!"

DARRELL.—"True; I own my shallow fault, and beg you ten thousand pardons. So then you really believe, from your own experience, that there is much in Vance's theory and your own very happy illustration? Could we, after many years, turn back to the romance at the page at which we left off, we should—"

COLONEL MORLEY.—"Not care a straw to read on! Certainly, half the peculiar charm of a person beloved must be ascribed to locality and circumstance."

DARRELL.—"I don't quite understand you."

COLONEL MORLEY.—"Then, as you liked my former illustration, I will explain myself by another one, more homely. In a room to which you are accustomed, there is a piece of furniture, or an ornament, which so exactly suits the place, that you say—'The prettiest thing I ever saw!' You go away—you return —the piece of furniture or the ornament has been moved into another room. You see it there, and you say—'Bless me, is that the thing I so much admired!' The strange room does not suit it—losing its old associations and accessories, it has lost its charm. So it is with human beings—seen in one place, the place would be nothing without them—seen in another, the place without them would be all the better!"

DARRELL (musingly).—"There are some puzzles in life which resemble the riddles a child asks you to solve. Your imagination cannot descend low enough for the right guess. Yet, when you are told, you are obliged to say —'How clever!' Man lives to learn."

"Since you have arrived at that conviction," replied Colonel Morley, amused by his friend's gravity, "I hope that you will rest satisfied with the experiences of Vance and myself; and that if you have a mind to propose to one of the young ladies whose merits we have already discussed, you will not deem it necessary to try what effect a prolonged absence might produce on your good resolution."

"No!" said Darrell, with sudden animation.

"Before three days are over, my mind shall be made up."

"Bravo!—as to whom of the three you would ask in marriage?"

"Or as to the idea of ever marrying again. Adieu, I am going to knock at that door."

"Mr. Vyvyan's! Ah, is it so, indeed? Verily, you are a true Dare-all."

"Do not be alarmed. I go afterwards to an exhibition with Lady Adela, and I dine with the Carr Viponts. My choice is not yet made, and my hand still free."

"His hand still free!" muttered the Colonel, pursuing his walk alone. "Yes—but three days hence—What will he do with it?"

CHAPTER XVI.

Guy Darrell's decision.

GUY DARRELL returned home from Carr Vipont's dinner at a late hour. On his table was a note from Lady Adela's father, cordially inviting Darrell to pass the next week at his country-house; London was now emptying fast. On the table too was a parcel, containing a book which Darrell had lent to Miss Vyvyan some weeks ago, and a note from herself. In calling at her father's house that morning, he had learned that Mr. Vyvyan had suddenly resolved to take her into Switzerland, with the view of passing the next winter in Italy. The room was filled with loungers of both sexes. Darrell had stayed but a short time. The leave-taking had been somewhat formal—Flora unusually silent. He opened her note, and read the first lines listlessly; those that followed, with a changing cheek and an earnest eye. He laid down the note very gently, again took it up, and reperused. Then he held it to the candle, and it dropped from his hand in tinder. "The innocent child," murmured he, with a soft paternal tenderness; "she knows not what she writes."

He began to pace the room with his habitual restlessness when in solitary thought—often stopping—often sighing heavily. At length his face cleared—his lips became firmly set. He summoned his favorite servant. "Mills," said he, "I shall leave town on horseback as soon as the sun rises. Put what I may require for a day or two into the saddle-bags. Possibly, however, I may be back by dinner-time. Call me at five o'clock, and then go round to the stables. I shall require no groom to attend me."

The next morning, while the streets were deserted, no houses as yet astir, but the sun bright, the air fresh, Guy Darrell rode from his door. He did not return the same day, nor the next, nor at all. But, late in the evening of the second day, his horse, reeking hot, and evidently hard-ridden, stopped at the porch of Fawley Manor-House; and Darrell flung himself from the saddle, and into Fairthorn's arms. "Back again—back again—and to leave no more!" said he, looking round; "*Spes et Fortuna valete!*"

CHAPTER XVII.

A Man's Letter—unsatisfactory and provoking as a man's letters always are.

GUY DARRELL TO COLONEL MORLEY.

Fawley Manor-House, August 19, 18—.

I HAVE decided, my dear Alban. I did not take three days to do so, though the third day may be just over ere you learn my decision. I shall never marry again: I abandon that last dream of declining years. My object in returning to London world was to try whether I could not find, amongst the fairest and most attractive women that the world produces—at least to an English eye—some one who could inspire me with that singleness of affection which could alone justify the hope that I might win, in return, a wife's esteem and a contented home. That object is now finally relinquished, and, with it, all idea of resuming the life of cities. I might have re-entered a political career, had I first secured to myself a mind sufficiently serene and healthful for duties that need the concentration of

thought and desire. Such a state of mind I cannot secure. I have striven for it; I am baffled. It is said that politics are a jealous mistress—that they require the whole man. The saying is not invariably true in the application it commonly receives—that is, a politician may have some other employment of intellect, which rather enlarges his powers than distracts their political uses. Successful politicians have united with great parliamentary toil and triumph legal occupations or learned studies. But politics do require that the *heart* should be free, and at peace from all more absorbing private anxieties—from the gnawing of a memory or a care, which dulls ambition and paralyzes energy. In this sense politics do require the whole man. If I returned to politics now, I should fail to them, and they to me. I feel that the brief interval between me and the grave has need of repose: I find that repose here. I have therefore given the necessary orders to dismiss the pompous retinue which I left behind me, and instructed my agent to sell my London house for whatever it may fetch. I was unwilling to sell it before—unwilling to abandon the hope, however faint, that I might yet regain strength for action. But the very struggle to obtain such strength leaves me exhausted more.

You may believe that it is not without a pang, less of pride than of remorse, that I resign unfulfilled the object towards which all my earlier life was so resolutely shaped. The house I promised my father to re-found dies to dust in my grave. To my father's blood no heir to my wealth can trace. Yet it is a consolation to think that Lionel Haughton is one on whom my father would have smiled approvingly. At my death, therefore, at least the old name will not die; Lionel Haughton will take and be worthy to bear it. Strange weakness of mine, you will say; but I cannot endure the thought that the old name should be quite blotted out of the land. I trust that Lionel may early form a suitable and happy marriage. Sure that he will not choose ignobly, I impose no fetters on his choice.

One word only on that hateful subject, confided so tardily to your friendship, left so thankfully to your discretion. Now that I have once more buried myself in Fawley, it is very unlikely that the man it pains me to name will seek me here. If he does, he cannot molest me as if I were in the London world. Continue, then, I pray you, to leave him alone. And, in adopting your own shrewd belief, that after all there is no such child as he pretends to claim, my mind becomes tranquillized on all that part of my private griefs.

Farewell, old school-friend! Here, so far as I can foretell—here, where my life began, it returns, when Heaven pleases, to close. Here I could not ask you to visit me; what is rest to me would be loss of time to you. But in my late and vain attempt to re-enter that existence in which you have calmly and wisely gathered round yourself, "all that should accompany old age—honor, love, obedience, troops of friends"—nothing so repaid the effort—nothing now so pleasantly remains to recollection—as the brief renewal of that easy commune which men like me never know, save with those whose laughter brings back to them a gale from the old play-ground, "*Vive, vale;*" I will not add, "*Sis memor mei.*" So many my obligations to your kindness, that you will be forced to remember me whenever you recall the *not* "painful subjects" of early friendship and lasting gratitude. Recall only those when reminded of

GUY DARRELL.

CHAPTER XVIII.

No coinage in circulation so fluctuates in value as the worth of a Marriageable Man.

COLONEL MORLEY was not surprised (*that*, we know, he could not be, by any fresh experience of human waywardness and caprice), but much disturbed and much vexed by the unexpected nature of Darrell's communication. Schemes for Darrell's future had become plans of his own. Talk with his old school-fellow had, within the last three months, entered into the pleasures of his age. Darrell's abrupt and final renunciation of this social world, made at once a void in the business of Alban's mind, and in the affections of Alban's heart. And no adequate reason assigned for so sudden a flight and so morbid a resolve! Some tormenting remembrance—some rankling grief—distinct from those of which Alban was cognizant, from those in which he had been consulted, was implied, but by vague and general hints. But what was the remembrance or the grief, Alban Morley, who knew everything, was quite persuaded that Darrell would never suffer him to know. Could it be in any way connected with those three young ladies to whom Darrell's attentions had been so perversely impartial? The Colonel did not fail to observe that to those young ladies Darrell's letter made no allusion.

Was it not possible that he had really felt for one of them a deeper sentiment than a man advanced in years ever likes to own even to his nearest friend—hazarded a proposal, and met with a rebuff? If so, Alban conjectured the female culprit by whom the sentiment had been inspired, and the rebuff administered. "That mischevious kitten, Flora Vyvyan," growled the Colonel. "I always felt that she had the claws of a tigress under her *patte de velours!*" Roused by this suspicion, he sallied forth to call on the Vyvyans. Mr. Vyvyan, a widower, one of those quiet gentleman-like men who sit much in the drawing-room and like receiving morning visitors, was at home to him. "So Darrell has left the town for the season," said the Colonel, pushing straight to the point.

"Yes," said Mr. Vyvyan. "I had a note from him this morning, to say he had renounced all hope of—"

"What?" cried the Colonel.

"Joining us in Switzerland. I am so sorry. Flora still more sorry. She is accustomed to have her own way, and she had set her heart on hearing Darrell read 'Manfred' in sight of the Jung Frau!"

"Um!" said the Colonel. "What might be sport to her might be death to him. A man at his age is not too old to fall in love with a young lady of hers. But he is too old not to be extremely ridiculous to *such* a young lady if he does."

"Colonel Morley—Fie!" cried an angry voice behind him. Flora had entered the room unobserved. Her face was much flushed, and her eyelids looked as if tears had lately swelled beneath them, and were swelling still.

"What have I said to merit your rebuke?" asked the Colonel composedly.

"Said! coupled the thought of ridicule with the name of Mr. Darrell!"

"Take care, Morley," said Mr. Vyvyan, laughing. "Flora is positively superstitious in her respect for Guy Darrell; and you cannot offend her more than by implying that he is mortal. Nay, child, it is very natural. Quite apart from his fame, there is something in that man's familiar talk, or rather, perhaps, in the very sound of his voice, which makes most other society seem flat and insipid. I feel it myself. And when Flora's young admirers flutter and babble round her—just after Darrell has quitted his chair beside her—they seem very poor company. I am sure, Flora," continued Vyvyan kindly, "that the mere acquaintance of such a man has done you much good; and I am now in great hopes that, whenever you mary, it will be a man of sense."

"Um!" again said the Colonel, eyeing Flora aslant, but with much attention. "How I wish, for my friend's sake, that he was of an age which inspired Miss Vyvyan with less—veneration."

Flora turned her back on the Colonel, looking out of the window, and her small foot beating the ground with nervous irritation.

"It was given out that Darrell intended to marry again," said Mr. Vyvyan. "A man of that sort requires a very superior, highly-educated woman; and if Miss Carr Vipont had been a little more of his age, she would have just suited him. But I am patriot enough to hope that he will remain single, and have no wife but his country, like Mr. Pitt."

The Colonel having now satisfied his curiosity, and assured himself that Darrell was, there at least, no rejected suitor, rose and approached Flora to make peace and to take leave. As he held out his hand, he was struck with the change in a countenance usually so gay in its aspect—it spoke of more than dejection, it betrayed distress; when she took his hand, she retained it, and looked into his eyes wistfully; evidently there was something on her mind which she wished to express and did not know how. At length she said in a whisper, "You are Mr. Darrell's most intimate friend; I have heard him say so; shall you see him soon?"

"I fear not; but why?"

"Why? you, his friend; do you not perceive that he is not happy? I, a mere stranger, saw it at the first. You should cheer and comfort him; *you* have that right—it is a noble privilege."

"My dear young lady," said the Colonel, touched, "you have a better heart than I thought for. It is true Darrell is not a happy man; but can you give me any message that might cheer him more than an old bachelor's commonplace exhortations to take heart, forget the rains of yesterday, and hope for some gleam of sun on the morrow!"

"No," said Flora, sadly, "it would be a presumption indeed in me to affect the consoler's part; but"—(her lips quivered)—"but if I may judge by his letter, I may never see him again."

"His letter! He has written to *you*, then, as well as to your father?"

"Yes," said Flora, confused and coloring, "A few lines in answer to a silly note of mine; yes, tell him that I shall never forget his kind counsels, his delicate, indulgent construction of—of—in short, tell him my father is right, and that I shall be better and wiser all my life for the few short weeks in which I have known Guy Darrell."

"What secrets are you two whispering there?" asked Mr. Vyvyan from his easy-chair.

"Ask her ten years hence," said the Colonel, as he retreated to the door. "The fairest leaves in the flower are the last that the bud will disclose."

From Mr. Vyvyan the Colonel went to Lord ——'s. His lordship had also heard from Darrell that morning; Darrell declined the invitation to —— Hall; business at Fawley. Lady Adela had borne the disappointment with her wonted serenity of temper, and had gone out shopping. Darrell had certainly not offered his hand in that quarter; had he done so—whether refused or accepted—all persons yet left in London would have heard the news. Thence the Colonel repaired to Carr Vipont's. Lady Selina was at home, and exceedingly cross. Carr had been astonished by a letter from Mr. Darrell, dated Fawley—left town for the season without even calling to take leave—a most eccentric man. She feared his head was a little touched—that he knew it, but did not like to own it—perhaps the doctors had told him he must keep quiet, and not excite himself with politics. "I had thought," said Lady Selina, "that he might have felt a growing attachment for Honoria; and considering the disparity of years, and that Honoria certainly might marry any one, he was too proud to incur the risk of refusal. But I will tell you in confidence, as a relation and dear friend, that Honoria has a very superior mind, and might have overlooked the mere age: congenial tastes—you understand. But on thinking it al over, I begin to doubt whether *that* be the true reason for his running away in this wild sort of manner.

"My maid tells me that his house-steward called to say that the establishment was to be broken up. That looks as if he had resigned London for good; just, too, when, Carr says, the Crisis, so long put off, is sure to burst on us. I'm quite sick of clever men—one never knows how to trust them; if they are not dishonest they are eccentric! I have just been telling Honoria that clever men are, after all, the most tiresome husbands. Well, what makes you so silent? What do you say? Why don't you speak?"

"I am slowly recovering from my shock," said the Colonel. "So Darrell shirks THE Crisis, and has not even hinted a preference for Honoria, the very girl in all London that would have made him a safe, rational companion. I told him so, and he never denied it. But it is a comfort to think he is no loss. Old monster!"

"Nay," said Lady Selina, mollified by so much sympathy, "I don't say he is no loss. Honestly speaking — between ourselves — I think he is a very great loss. An alliance between him and Honoria would have united all the Vipont influence. Lord Montfort has the greatest confidence in Darrell; and if this Crisis comes, it is absolutely necessary for the Vipont interest that it should find somebody who can speak. Really, my dear Colonel Morley, you who have such an influence over this very odd man, should exert it now. One must not be overnice in times of Crisis; the country is at stake, Cousin Alban."

"I will do my best," said the Colonel; "I am quite aware that an alliance which would secure Darrell's talents to the House of Vipont, and the House of Vipont to Darrell's talents, would—but 'tis no use talking, we must not sacrifice Honoria even on the altar of her country's interest!"

"Sacrifice! Nonsense! The man is not young certainly, but then what a grand creature, and so clever."

"Clever—yes! But that was your very objection to him five minutes ago."

"I forgot the Crisis.—One don't want clever men every day, but there *are* days when one does want them!"

"I envy you that aphorism. But from what you now imply, I fear that Honoria may have allowed her thoughts to settle upon what may never take place; and if so, she may fret."

"Fret! a daughter of mine fret!—and of all my daughters, Honoria! A girl of the best-disciplined mind! Fret! what a word!—vulgar!"

Colonel Morley.—"So it is; I blush for it; but let us understand each other. If Darrell proposed for Honoria, you think, ambition apart, she would esteem him sufficiently for a decided preference."

Lady Selina.—"If that be his doubt, reassure him. He is shy—men of genius are; Honoria *would esteem* him! Till he has actually proposed, it would compromise her to say more even to you."

Colonel Morley.—"And if that be not the doubt, and if I ascertain that Darrell has no idea of proposing, Honoria would—"

Lady Selina.—"Despise him. Ah, I see by your countenance that you think I should prepare her. Is it so, frankly?"

Colonel Morley. — "Frankly, then. I

think Guy Darrell, like many other men, has been so long making up his mind to marry again, that he has lost the right moment and will never find it."

Lady Selina smells at her vinaigrette, and replies in in her softest, affectedest, civilest, and crushingest manner—

"*Poor*—DEAR—OLD MAN!"

CHAPTER XIX.

Man is not permitted, with ultimate impunity, to exasperate the envies, and insult the miseries of those around him, by a systematic perseverance in wilful—Celibacy. In vain may he scheme, in the marriage of injured friends, to provide arm-chairs, and footstools, and prattling babies for the luxurious delectation of his indolent age. The avenging Eumenides (being themselves ancient virgins neglected) shall humble his insolence, baffle his projects, and condemn his declining years to the horrors of solitude,—rarely even wakening his soul to the grace of repentance.

THE Colonel, before returning home, dropped into the Clubs, and took care to give to Darrell's sudden disappearance a plausible and commonplace construction. The season was just over. Darrell had gone to the country. The town establishment was broken up, because the house in Carlton Gardens was to be sold. Darrell did not like the situation—found the air relaxing—Park Lane or Grosvenor Square were on higher ground. Besides, the staircase was bad for a house of such pretensions—not suited to large parties. Next season Darrell might be in a position when he would have to give large parties, etc. etc. As no one is inclined to suppose that a man will retire from public life just when he has a chance to office, so the Clubs took Alban Morley's remarks unsuspiciously, and generally agreed that Darrell showed great tact in absenting himself from town during the transition state of politics that always precedes a CRISIS, and that it was quite clear that he calculated on playing a great part when the CRISIS was over, by finding his house had grown too small for him.

Thus paving the way to Darrell's easy return to the world, should he repent of his retreat (a chance which Alban by no means dismissed from his reckoning), the Colonel returned home to find his nephew George awaiting him there. The scholarly clergyman had ensconced himself in the back drawing-room, fitted up as a library, and was making free with the books. "What have you there, George?" asked the Colonel, after shaking him by the hand. "You seemed quite absorbed in its contents, and would not have noticed my presence but for Gyp's bark."

"A volume of poems I never chanced to meet before, full of true genius."

"Bless me, poor Arthur Branthwaite's poems. And you were positively reading those—not induced to do so by respect for his father? Could you make head or tail of them?"

"There is a class of poetry which displeases middle age by the very attributes which render it charming to the young; for each generation has a youth with idiosyncrasies peculiar to itself, and a peculiar poetry by which those idiosyncrasies are expressed."

Here George was beginning to grow metaphysical, and somewhat German, when his uncle's face assumed an expression which can only be compared to that of a man who dreads a very severe and long operation. George humanely hastened to relieve his mind.

"But I will not bore you at present."

"Thank you," said the Colonel, brightening up.

"Perhaps you will lend me the book. I am going down to Lady Montfort's by-and-by, and I can read it by the way."

"Yes, I will lend it to you till next season. Let me have it again then, to put on the table when Frank Vance comes to breakfast with me. The poet was his brother-in-law; and though, for that reason, poets and poetry are a sore subject with Frank, yet, the last time he breakfasted here, I felt by the shake of his hand in parting, that he felt pleased by a mark of respect to all that is left of poor Arthur Branthwaite. So you are going to Lady Montfort? Ask her why she cuts me!"

"My dear uncle! You know how secluded her life is at present; but she has charged me to assure you of her unalterable regard for you; and whenever her health and spirits are somewhat more recovered, I have no doubt that she will ask you to give her the occasion to make that assurance in person."

COLONEL MORLEY.—"Can her health and spirits continue so long affected by grief for

the loss of that distant acquaintance whom the law called her husband?"

GEORGE.—"She is very far from well, and her spirits are certainly much broken. And now, uncle, for the little favor I came to ask. Since you presented me to Mr. Darrell, he kindly sent me two or three invitations to dinner, which my frequent absence from town would not allow me to accept. I ought to call on him; and, as I feel ashamed not to have done so before, I wish you would accompany me to his house. One happy word from you would save me a relapse into stutter. When I want to apologize, I always stutter."

"Darrell has left town," said the Colonel, roughly, "you have missed an opportunity that will never occur again. The most charming companion; an intellect so manly, yet so sweet! *I* shall never find such another." And for the first time in thirty years a tear stole to Alban Morley's eye.

GEORGE.—"When did he leave town?"

COLONEL MORLEY.—"Three days ago."

GEORGE.—"Three days ago! and for the Continent again?"

COLONEL MORLEY.—"No; for the Hermitage, George. I have such a letter from him! You know how many years he has been absent from the world. When, this year, he reappeared, he and I grew more intimate than we had ever been since we had left school; for though the same capital held us before, he was then too occupied for much familiarity with an idle man like me. But just when I was intertwining what is left of my life with the bright threads of his, he snaps the web asunder: he quits this London world again; says he will return to it no more."

GEORGE.—"Yet I did hear that he proposed to renew his parliamentary career; nay, that he was about to form a second marriage, with Honoria Vipont?"

COLONEL MORLEY.—"Mere gossip—not true. No, he will never marry again. Three days ago I thought it certain that he would—certain that I should find for my old age a nook in his home—the easiest chair in his social circle; that my daily newspaper would have a fresh interest, in the praise of his name, or the report of his speech; that I should walk proudly into White's, sure to hear there of Guy Darrell; that I should keep from misanthropical rust my dry knowledge of life, planning shrewd panegyrics to him of a young happy wife, needing all his indulgence—panegyrics to her of the high-minded sensitive man, claiming tender respect, and delicate soothing;—that thus, day by day, I should have made more pleasant the home in which I should have planted myself, and found in his children boys to lecture and girls to spoil. Don't be jealous, George. I like your wife, I love your little ones, and you will inherit all I have to leave. But to an old bachelor, who will keep young to the last, there is no place so sunny as the hearth of an old school-friend. But my house of cards is blown down—talk of it no more—'tis a painful subject. You met Lionel Haughton here the last time you called—how did you like him?"

"Very much, indeed."

"Well then, since you cannot call on Darrell, call on him."

GEORGE (with animation).—"It is just what I meant to do—what is his address?"

COLONEL MORLEY.—"There is his card—take it. He was here last night to inquire if I knew where Darrell had gone, though no one in his household, nor I either, suspected till this morning that Darrell had left town for good. You will find Lionel at home, for I sent him word I would call. But really I am not up to it now. Tell him from me that Mr. Darrell will not return to Carlton Gardens this season, and is gone to Fawley. At present Lionel need not know more—you understand? And now, my dear George, good-day."

CHAPTER XX.

Each generation has its own critical canons in poetry as well as in political creeds, financial systems, or whatever other changeable matters of taste are called "Settled Questions" and "Fixed Opinions."

GEORGE, musing much over all that his uncle had said respecting Darrell, took his way to Lionel's lodgings. The young man received him with the cordial greeting due from Darrell's kinsman to Colonel Morley's nephew, but tempered by the respect no less due to the distinction and the calling of the eloquent preacher.

Lionel was perceptibly affected by learning that Darrell had thus suddenly returned to the gloomy beech-woods of Fawley; and he evinced

his anxious interest in his benefactor with so much spontaneous tenderness of feeling, that George, as if in sympathy, warmed into the same theme. "I can well conceive," said he, "your affection for Mr. Darrell. I remember, when I was a boy, how powerfully he impressed me, though I saw but little of him. He was then in the zenith of his career, and had but few moments to give to a boy like me; but the ring of his voice and the flash of his eye sent me back to school, dreaming of fame, and intent on prizes. I spent part of one Easter vacation at his house in town; he bade his son, who was my school-fellow, invite me."

LIONEL.—"You knew his son? How Mr. Mr. Darrell has felt that loss!"

GEORGE.—"Heaven often veils its most provident mercy in what to man seems its sternest inflictions. That poor boy must have changed his whole nature, if his life had not to a father, like Mr. Darrell, occasioned grief sharper than his death."

LIONEL.—"You amaze me. Mr. Darrell spoke of him as a boy of great promise."

GEORGE.—"He had that kind of energy which to a father conveys the idea of promise, and which might deceive those older than himself—a fine bright-eyed bold-tongued boy, with just enough awe of his father to bridle his worst qualities before him."

LIONEL.—"What were those?"

GEORGE.—"Headstrong arrogance—relentless cruelty. He had a pride which would have shamed his father out of pride, had Guy Darrell detected its nature — purse pride! I remember his father said to me with a half-laugh, 'My boy must not be galled and mortified as I was every hour at school—clothes patched and pockets empty.' And so, out of mistaken kindness, Mr. Darrell ran into the opposite extreme, and the son was proud, not of his father's fame, but of his father's money, and withal not generous, nor exactly extravagant, but using money as power —power that allowed him to insult an equal or to buy a slave. In a word, his nickname at school was 'Sir Giles Overreach.' His death was the result of his strange passion for tormenting others. He had a fag who could not swim, and who had the greatest terror of the water; and it was while driving this child into the river out of his depth, that cramp seized himself, and he was drowned. Yes, when I think what that boy would have been as man, succeeding to Darrell's wealth—and had Darrell persevered (as he would, perhaps, if the boy had lived) in his public career—to the rank and titles he would probably have acquired and bequeathed—again, I say, in man's affliction is often Heaven's mercy."

Lionel listened aghast. George continued —"Would that I could speak as plainly to Mr. Darrell himself! For we find constantly in the world that there is no error that misleads us like the error that is half a truth wrenched from the other half; and nowhere is such an error so common as when man applies it to the judgment of some event in his own life, and separates calamity from consolation."

LIONEL.—"True; but who could have the heart to tell a mourning father that his dead son was worthless?"

GEORGE.—"Alas! my young friend, the preacher must sometimes harden his own heart if he would strike home to another's soul. But I am not sure that Mr. Darrell would need so cruel a kindness. I believe that his clear intellect must have divined some portions of his son's nature which enabled him to bear the loss with fortitude. And he did bear it bravely. But now, Mr. Haughton, if you have the rest of the day free, I am about to make you an unceremonious proposition for its disposal. A lady who knew Mr. Darrell when she was very young, has a strong desire to form your acquaintance. She resides on the banks of the Thames, a little above Twickenham. I have promised to call on her this evening. Shall we dine together at Richmond? And afterwards we can take a boat to her villa."

Lionel at once accepted, thinking so little of the lady that he did not even ask her name. He was pleased to have a companion with whom he could talk of Darrell. He asked but delay to write a few lines of affectionate inquiry to his kinsman at Fawley, and, while he wrote, George took out Arthur Branthwaite's poems, and resumed their perusal. Lionel having sealed his letter, George extended the book to him. "Here are some remarkable poems by a brother-in-law of that remarkable artist, Frank Vance."

"Frank Vance! True, he had a brother-in-law a poet. I admire Frank so much; and, though he professes to sneer at poetry, he is so associated in my mind with poetical images,

that I am prepossessed beforehand in favor of all that brings him, despite himself, in connection with poetry."

"Tell me then," said George, pointing out a passage in the volume, "what you think of these line. My good uncle would call them gibberish. I am not sure that I can construe them; but when I was your age, I think I could —what say you?"

Lionel glanced. "Exquisite indeed!—nothing can be clearer—they express exactly a sentiment in myself that I could never explain."

"Just so," said George, laughing. "Youth has a sentiment that it cannot explain, and the sentiment is expressed in a form of poetry that middle age cannot construe. It is true that poetry of the grand order interests equally all ages; but the world ever throws out a poetry not of the grandest; not meant to be durable—not meant to be universal, but following the shifts and changes of human sentiment, and just like those pretty sundials formed by flowers, which bloom to tell the hour, open their buds to tell it, and, telling it, fade themselves from time."

Not listening to the critic, Lionel continued to read the poems, exclaiming, "How exquisite!—how true!"

CHAPTER XXI.

In Life, as in Art, the Beautiful moves in curves.

They have dined. George Morley takes the oars, and the boat cuts through the dance of waves flushed by the golden sunset. Beautiful river! which might furnish the English tale-teller with legends wild as those culled on shores licked by Hydaspes, and sweet as those which Cephisus ever blended with the songs of nightingales and the breath of violets! But what true English poet ever names thee, O Father Thames, without a melodious tribute? And what child ever whiled away summer noons along thy grassy banks, nor hallowed thy remembrance among the fairy days of life?

Silently Lionel bent over the side of the gliding boat, his mind carried back to the same soft stream five years ago. How vast a space in his short existence those five years seemed to fill! And how distant from the young man, rich in the attributes of wealth, armed with each weapon of distinction, seemed the hour when the boy had groaned aloud, "Fortune is so far, Fame so impossible!"

Farther and farther yet than his present worldly station from his past, seemed the image that had first called forth in his breast the dreamy sentiment, which the sternest of us in after life never utterly forget. Passions rage and vanish, and when all their storms are gone, yea, it may be, at the verge of the very grave, we look back and see like a star the female face, even though it be a child's, that first set us vaguely wondering at the charm in a human presence, at the void in a smile withdrawn! How many of us could recall a Beatrice through the gaps of ruined hope, seen, as by the Florentine, on the earth a guileless infant, in the heavens a spirit glorified! Yes—Laura was an affectation—Beatrice a reality!

George's voice broke somewhat distastefully on Lionel's reverie. "We near our destination, and you have not asked me even the name of the lady to whom you are to render homage. It is Lady Montfort, widow to the last Marquess. You have no doubt heard Mr. Darrell speak of her?"

"Never Mr. Darrell—Colonel Morley often. And in the world I have heard her cited as perhaps the handsomest, and certainly the haughtiest, women in England."

"Never heard Mr. Darrell mention her! that is strange, indeed," said George Morley, catching at Lionel's first words, and unnoticing his after comment. "She was much in his house as a child, shared in his daughter's education."

"Perhaps for that very reason he shuns her name. Never but once did I hear him allude to his daughter; nor can I wonder at that, if it be true, as I have been told by people who seem to know very little of the particulars, that, while yet scarcely out of the nursery, she fled from his house with some low adventurer—a Mr. Hammond—died abroad the first year of that unhappy marriage."

"Yes, that is the correct outline of the story; and as you guess, it explains why Mr. Darrell avoids mention of one whom he associates with his daughter's name, though, if you desire a theme dear to Lady Montfort, you can select none that more interests her grateful heart, than praise of the man who

saved her mother from penury, and secured to herself the accomplishments and instruction which have been her chief solace."

"Chief solace! Was she not happy with Lord Montfort? What sort of man was he?"

"I owe to Lord Montfort the living I hold, and I can remember the good qualities alone of a benefactor. If Lady Montfort was not happy with him, it is just to both to say that she never complained. But there is much in Lady Montfort's character which the Marquess apparently failed to appreciate; at all events, they had little in common, and what was called Lady Montfort's haughtiness was perhaps but the dignity with which a woman of grand nature checks the pity that would debase her—the admiration that would sully—guards her own beauty, and protects her husband's name. Here we are. Will you stay for a few minutes in the boat, while I go to prepare Lady Montfort for your visit?"

George leapt ashore, and Lionel remained under the covert of mighty willows that dipped their leaves into the wave. Looking through the green interstices of the foliage, he saw at the far end of the lawn, on a curving bank by which the glittering tide shot oblique, a simple arbor—an arbor like that from which he had looked upon summer stars five years ago—not so densely covered with the honeysuckle; still the honeysuckle, recently trained there, was fast creeping up the sides; and through the trellis of the woodwork and the leaves of the flowering shrub, he just caught a glimpse of some form within—the white robe of a female form in a slow gentle movement—tending perhaps the flowers that wreathed the arbor. Now it was still, now it stirred again; now it was suddenly lost to view. Had the inmate left the arbor? Was the inmate Lady Montfort? George Morley's step had not passed in that direction.

CHAPTER XXII.

A quiet scene—an unquiet heart.

MEANWHILE, not far from the willow-bank which sheltered Lionel, but far enough to be out of her sight, and beyond her hearing, George Morley found Lady Montfort seated alone. It was a spot on which Milton might have placed the lady in "Comus"—a circle of the smoothest sward, ringed everywhere (except at one opening which left the glassy river in full view) with thick bosks of dark evergreens, and shrubs of livelier verdure; oak and chestnut backing and overhanging all. Flowers, too, raised on rustic tiers and stages; a tiny fountain, shooting up from a basin starred with the water-lily; a rustic table, on which lay books and the implements of woman's graceful work; so that the place had the home-look of a chamber, and spoke that intense love of the outdoor life which abounds in our old poets from Chaucer down to the day when minstrels, polished into wits, took to Wills' Coffeehouse, and the lark came no more to bid bards

> "Good-morrow
> From his watch-tower in the skies."

But long since, thank Heaven, we have again got back the English poetry which chimes to the babble of the waters, and the riot of the birds; and just as that poetry is the freshest which the out-door life has the most nourished, so I believe that there is no surer sign of the rich vitality which finds its raciest joys in sources the most innocent, than the child-like taste for that same out-door life. Whether you take from fortune the palace or the cottage, add to your chambers a hall in the courts of Nature. Let the earth but give you room to stand on; well, look up—Is it nothing to have for your roof-tree—Heaven?

Caroline Montfort (be her titles dropped) is changed since we last saw her. The beauty is not less in degree, but it has gained in one attribute, lost in another; it commands less, it touches more. Still in deep mourning, the sombre dress throws a paler shade over the cheek. The eyes, more sunken beneath the brow, appear larger, softer. There is that expression of fatigue which either accompanies impaired health or succeeds to mental struggle and disquietude

But the coldness or pride of mien which was peculiar to Caroline as a wife, is gone,—as if in widowhood it was no longer needed. A something like humility prevailed over the look and the bearing which had been so tranquilly majestic. As at the approach of her cousin she started from her seat, there was a nervous tremor in her eagerness; a rush of

color to the cheeks; an anxious quivering of the lip; a flutter in the tones of the sweet low voice;—"Well, George."

"Mr. Darrell is not in London; he went to Fawley three days ago; at least he is there now. I have this from my uncle, to whom he wrote; and whom his departure has vexed and saddened."

"Three days ago! It must have been he, then! I was not deceived," murmured Caroline, and her eyes wandered round.

"There is no truth in the report you heard that he was to marry Honoria Vipont. My uncle thinks he will never marry again, and implies that he has resumed his solitary life at Fawley with a resolve to quit it no more."

Lady Montfort listened silently, bending her face over the fountain, and dropping amidst its playful spray the leaves of a rose which she had abstractedly plucked as George was speaking.

"I have, therefore, fulfilled your commission so far," renewed George Morley. "I have ascertained that Mr. Darrell is alive, and doubtless well; so that it could not have been his ghost that startled you amidst yonder thicket. But I have done more: I have forstalled the wish you expressed to become acquainted with young Haughton; and your object in postponing the accomplisment of that wish while Mr. Darrell himself was in town, having ceased with Mr. Darrell's departure, I have ventured to bring the young man with me. He is in the boat yonder. Wilt you receive him? Or—but, my dear cousin, are you not too unwell to-day? What is the matter? Oh, I can easily make an excuse for you to Haughton. I will run and do so."

"No, George, no. I am as well as usual. I will see Mr. Haughton. All that you have heard of him, and have told me, interests me so much in his favor; and besides—" She did not finish the sentence; but, led away by some other thought, asked, "Have you no news of our missing friend?"

"None as yet; but in a few days I shall renew my search. Now, then, I will go for Haughton."

"Do so; and, George, when you have presented him to me, will you kindly join that dear anxious child yonder? She is in the new arbor, or near it—her favorite spot. You must sustain her spirits, and give her hope. You cannot guess how eagerly she looks forward to your visits, and how gratefully she relies on your exertions."

George shook his head half despondingly, and saying briefly, "My exertions have established no claim to her gratitude as yet," went quickly back for Lionel.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Something on an old subject, which has never been said before.

Although Lionel was prepared to see a very handsome woman in Lady Montfort, the beauty of her countenance took him by surprise. No preparation by the eulogies of description can lessen the effect that the first sight of a beautiful object produces upon a mind to which refinement of idea gives an accurate and quick comprehension of beauty. Be it a work of art, a scene in nature, or, rarest of all, a human face divine, a beauty never before beheld strikes us with hidden pleasure, like a burst of light: And it is a pleasure that elevates; the imagination feels itself richer by a new idea of excellence; for not only is real beauty wholly original, having no prototype, but its immediate influence is spiritual.

It may seem strange—I appeal to every observant artist if the assertion be not true—but the first sight of the most perfect order of female beauty, rather than courting, rebukes and strikes back, every grosser instinct that would alloy admiration. There must be some meanness and blemish in the beauty which the sensualist no sooner beholds than he covets. In the higher incarnation of the abstract idea which runs through all our notions of moral good and celestial purity—even if the moment the eye sees the heart loves the image—the love has in it something of the reverence which it was said the charms of Virtue would produce could her form be made visible; nor could mere human love obtrude itself till the sweet awe of the first effect had been familiarized away. And I apprehend that it is this exalting or etherealizing attribute of beauty to which all poets, all writers who would poetize the realities of life, have unconsciously ren-

dered homage, in the rank to which they elevate what, stripped of such attribute, would be but a gaudy idol of painted clay.

If from the loftiest epic to the tritest novel, a heroine is often little more than a name to which we are called upon to bow, as to a symbol representing beauty; and if we ourselves (be we ever so indifferent in our common life to fair faces) feel that, in art at least, imagination needs an image of the Beautiful—if, in a word, both poet and reader here would not be left excuseless, it is because in our inmost hearts there is a sentiment which links the ideal of beauty with the Supersensual. Wouldst thou, for instance, form some vague conception of the shape worn by a pure soul released; wouldst thou give to it the likeness of an ugly hag? or wouldst thou not ransack all thy remembrances and conceptions of forms most beauteous to clothe the holy image? Do so: now bring it thus robed with the richest graces before thy mind's eye. Well, seest thou now the excuse for poets in the rank they give to BEAUTY? Seest thou now how high from the realms of the senses soars the mysterious Archetype? Without the idea of beauty, couldst thou conceive a form in which to clothe a soul that has entered heaven?

CHAPTER XXIV.

Agreeable surprises are the perquisities of youth.

IF the beauty of Lady Montfort's countenance took Lionel by surprise, still more might he wonder at the winning kindness of her address—a kindness of look, manner, voice, which seemed to welcome him not as a chance acquaintance but as a new-found relation. The first few sentences, in giving them a subject of common interest, introduced into their converse a sort of confiding household familiarity. For Lionel, ascribing Lady Montfort's gracious reception to her early recollections of his kinsman, began at once to speak of Guy Darrell; and in a little time they were walking over the turf, or through the winding alleys of the garden, linking talk to the same theme, she by question, he by answer—he, charmed to expatiate—she pleased to listen—and liking each other more and more, as she recognized in all he said a bright young heart, overflowing with grateful and proud affection, and as he felt instinctively that he was with one who sympathized in his enthusiasm—one who had known the great man in his busy day, ere the rush of career had paused, whose childhood had lent a smile to the great man's home before childhood and smile had left it.

As they thus conversed, Lionel now and then, in the turns of their walk, caught a glimpse of George Morley in the distance, walking also side by side with some young companion, and ever as he caught that glimpse a strange restless curiosity shot across his mind, and distracted it even from praise of Guy Darrell. Who could that be with George? Was it a relation of Lady Montfort's? The figure was not in mourning; its shape seemed slight and youthful—now it passes by that acacia tree,—standing for a moment apart and distinct from George's shadow, but its own outline dim in the deepening twilight—now it has passed on, lost amongst the laurels.

A turn in the walk brought Lionel and Lady Montfort before the windows of the house, which was not large for the rank of the owner, but commodious, with no pretence to architectural beauty—dark-red brick, a century and a half old—irregular; jutting forth here, receding there, so as to produce that depth of light and shadow, which lends a certain picturesque charm even to the least ornate buildings—a charm to which the Gothic architecture owes half its beauty. Jessamine, roses, woodbine, ivy, trained up the angles and between the windows. Altogether the house had that air of HOME which had been wanting to the regal formality of Montfort Court. One of the windows, raised above the ground by a short winding stair, stood open. Lights had just been brought into the room within, and Lionel's eye was caught by the gleam.

Lady Montfort turned up the stair, and Lionel followed her into the apartment. A harp stood at one corner—not far from it a piano and music-stand. On one of the tables there were the implements of drawing—a sketch in water-colors half finished.

"Our work-room," said Lady Montfort, with a warm cheerful smile, and yet Lionel could see that tears were in her eyes—"mine and my dear pupil's. Yes, that harp is hers. Is he still fond of music—I mean Mr. Darrell?"

"Yes, though he does not care for it in

crowds; but he can listen for hours to Fairthorn's lute. You remember Mr. Fairthorn?"

"Ay, I remember him," answered Lady Montfort softly. "Mr. Darrell then likes *his* music, still?"

Lionel here uttered an exclamation of more than surprise. He had turned to examine the water-color sketch—a rustic inn, a honeysuckle arbor, a river in front, a boat yonder—just begun.

"I know the spot!" he cried. "Did you make the sketch of it?"

"I? no; it is hers—my pupil's—my adopted child's."

Lionel's dark eyes turned to Lady Montfort's wistfully, inquiringly; they asked what his lips could not presume to ask. "Your adopted child—what is she?—who?"

As if answering to the eyes, Lady Montfort said—"Wait here a moment; I will go for her."

She left him, descended the stairs into the garden, joined George Morley and his companion; took aside the former, whispered him, then drawing the arm of the latter within her own, led her back into the room, while George Morley remained in the garden, throwing himself on a bench, and gazing on the stars as they now came forth, fast and frequent, though one by one.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Quem Fors dierum cunque dabit
Lucro appone."—HORAT.

LIONEL stood, expectant, in the centre of the room, and as the two female forms entered, the lights were full upon their faces. That younger face—it is she—it is she, the unforgotten—the long lost. Instinctively, as if no years had rolled between—as if she were still the little child, he the boy who had coveted such a sister—he sprang forward and opened his arms, and as suddenly halted, dropped the arms to his side, blushing, confused, abashed. She! that vagrant child!—she! that form so elegant—that great peeress's pupil—adopted daughter, *she* the poor wandering Sophy! She!—impossible!

But her eyes, at first downcast, are now fixed on him. She, too, starts—not forward, but in recoil: she, too, raises her arms, not to open, but to press them to her breast; and she, too, as suddenly checks an impulse, and stands, like him, blushing, confused, abashed.

"Yes," said Caroline Montfort, drawing Sophy nearer to her breast,—"Yes, you will both forgive me for the surprise. Yes, you do see before you, grown up to become the pride of those who cherish her, that Sophy who—"

"Sophy!" cried Lionel advancing; "it is so, then! I knew you were no stroller's grandchild."

Sophy drew up—"I am, I am *his* grandchild, and as proud to be so as I was then."

"Pardon me, pardon me; I meant to say that he too was not what he seemed. You forgive me," extending his hand, and Sophy's soft hand fell into his forgivingly.

"But he lives? is well? is here? is—" Sophy burst into tears, and Lady Montfort made a sign to Lionel to go into the garden, and leave them. Reluctantly and dizzily, as one in a dream, he obeyed, leaving the vagrant's grandchild to be soothed in the fostering arms of her whom, an hour or two ago, he knew but by the titles of her rank and the reputation of her pride.

It was not many minutes before Lady Montfort rejoined him.

"You touched unawares," said she "upon the poor child's most anxious cause of sorrow. Her grandfather, for whom her affection is so sensitively keen, has disappeared. I will speak of that later; and if you wish, you shall be taken into our consultations. But—" she paused, looked into his face—open, loyal face, face of gentleman—with heart of man in its eyes, soul of man on its brow;—face formed to look up to the stars which now lighted it—and laying her hand lightly on his shoulder, resumed with hesitating voice—"But I feel like a culprit in asking you what, nevertheless, I must ask, as an imperative condition, if your visits here are to be renewed—if your intimacy here is to be established. And unless you comply with that condition, come no more; we cannot confide in each other."

"Oh, Lady Montfort, impose any condition. I promise beforehand."

"Not beforehand. The condition is this: inviolable secresy. You will not mention to

any one your visits here; your introduction to me; your discovery of the stroller's grandchild in my adopted daughter?"

"Not to Mr. Darrell?"

"To him least of all; but this I add, it is for Mr. Darrells's sake that I insist on such concealment; and I trust the concealment will not be long protracted."

"For Mr, Darrell's sake!"

"For the sake of his happiness," cried Lady Montfort, clasping her hands. "My debt to him is larger far than yours; and in thus appealing to you, I scheme to pay back a part of it. Do you trust me?"

"I do, I do."

And from that evening Lionel Haughton became the constant visitor in that house.

Two or three days afterwards Colonel Morley, quitting England for a German Spa at which he annually recruited himself for a few weeks, relieved Lionel from the embarrassment of any questions which that shrewd observer might otherwise have addressed to him. London itself was now empty. Lionel found a quiet lodging in the vicinity of Twickenham. And when his foot passed along the shady lane through yon wicket gate into that region of turf and flowers, he felt as might have felt that famous Minstrel of Ercildoun, when blest with the privilege to enter Fairyland at will, the Rhymer stole to the grassy hillside, and murmured the spell that unlocks the gates of Oberon.

BOOK EIGHTH.

CHAPTER I.

"A little fire burns up a great deal of corn."
—OLD PROVERB.

GUY DARRELL resumed the thread of solitary life at Fawley with a calm which was deeper in its gloom than it had been before. The experiment of return to the social world had failed. The resolutions which had induced the experiment were finally renounced. Five years nearer to death, and the last hope that had flitted across the narrowing passage to the grave, fallen like a faithless torch from his own hand, and trodden out by his own foot.

It was peculiarly in the nature of Darrell to connect his objects with posterity—to regard eminence in the Present but as a beacon-height from which to pass on to the Future the name he had taken from the Past. All his early ambition, sacrificing pleasure to toil, had placed its goal at a distance, remote from the huzzas of bystanders; and Ambition halted now, baffled and despairing. Childless, his line would perish with himself—himself, who had so vaunted its restoration in the land! His genius was childless also—it would leave behind it no offspring of the brain. By toil he had amassed ample wealth; by talent he had achieved a splendid reputation. But the reputation was as perishable as the wealth.

Let a half-century pass over his tomb, and nothing would be left to speak of the successful lawyer, the applauded orator, save traditional aucedotes, a laudatory notice in contemporaneous memoirs—perhaps, at most, quotations of eloquent sentences lavished on forgotten cases and obsolete debates—shreds and fragments of a great intellect, which another half-century would sink without a bubble into the depths of Time.* He had enacted no laws—he had administered no state—he had composed no books. Like the figure on a clock, which adorns the case and has no connection with the movement, he, so prominent an ornament to time, had no part in its works. Removed, the eye would miss him for a while; but a nation's literature or history was the same, whether with him or without. Some with a tithe of his abilities have the luck to fasten their names to things that endure; they have been responsible for measures they did not invent, and which, for good or evil, influence long generations.

They have written volumes out of which a couplet of verse, a period in prose, may cling to the rock of ages, as a shell that survives a a deluge. But the orator, whose effects are immediate—who enthralls his audience in proportion as he nicks the hour—who, were he speaking like Burke what, apart from the subject-matter, closet students would praise, must, like Burke, thin his audience, and exchange present oratorical success for ultimate intellectual renown—a man, in short, whose oratory is emphatically that of the DEBATER, is like an actor, rewarded with a loud applause and a complete oblivion. Waife on the village stage might win applause no less loud, followed by oblivion not more complete.

Darrell was not blind to the brevity of his fame. In his previous seclusion he had been resigned to that conviction—now it saddened him. Then, unconfessed by himself, the idea

* It is so with many a Pollio of the Bar and Senate. Fifty years hence, and how faint upon the page of Hansard will be the vestiges of Follett! No printer's type can record his decorous grace—the persuasion of his silvery tongue. A hundred years hence, may not even Plunkett, weightiest speaker, on his own subject, in the assembly that contained a Canning and a Brougham, be a myth to our grandsons?

that he might yet reappear in active life, and do so something which the world would not willingly let die, had softened the face of that tranquil Nature from which he must soon now pass out of reach and sight. On the tree of Time he was a leaf already sear upon the bough—not an inscription graven into the rind.

Ever slow to yield to weak regrets—ever seeking to combat his own enemies within—Darrell said to himself one night, while Fairthorn's flute was breathing an air of romance through the melancholy walls, "Is it too late yet to employ this still busy brain upon works that will live when I am dust, and make Posterity supply the heir that fails to my house?"

He shut himself up with immortal authors—he meditated on the choice of a theme; his knowledge was wide, his taste refined;—words!—*he* could not want words! Why should he not write? Alas! why indeed?—He who has never been a writer in his youth, can no more be a writer in his age than he can be a painter—a musician. What! not write a book? Oh, yes—as he may paint a picture or set a song. But a writer, in the emphatic sense of the word—a writer as Darrell was an orator—Oh, no! And, least of all, will he be a writer if he has been an orator by impulse and habit—an orator too happily gifted to require, and too laboriously occupied to resort to, the tedious aids of written preparation—an orator as modern life forms orators—not, of course, an orator like those of the classic world, who elaborated sentences before delivery, and who, after delivery, polished each extemporaneous interlude into rhetorical exactitude and musical perfection.

And how narrow the range of compositions to a man burdened already by a grave reputation! He cannot have the self-abandonment—he cannot venture the headlong charge—with which Youth flings the reins to genius, and dashes into the ranks of Fame. Few and austere his themes—fastidious and hesitating his taste. Restricted are the movements of him who walks for the first time into the Forum of Letters with the purple hem on his senatorial toga. Guy Darrell, at his age, entering among authors as a novice!—he, the great lawyer, to whom attorneys would have sent no briefs had he been suspected of coquetting with a muse—he, the great orator who had electrified audiences in proportion to the sudden effects which distinguish oral inspiration from written eloquence—he achieve now, in an art which his whole life had neglected, any success commensurate to his contemporaneous repute;—how unlikely!

But a success which should outlive that repute, win the "everlasting inheritance" which could alone have nerved him to adequate effort—how impossible! He could not himself comprehend why, never at a loss for language felicitously apposite or richly ornate when it had but to flow from his thought to his tongue, nor wanting ease, even eloquence, in epistolary correspondence confidentially familiar—he should find words fail ideas, and ideas fail words, the moment his pen became a wand that conjured up the Ghost of the dread Public! The more copious his thoughts, the more embarrassing their selection; the more exquisite his perception of excellence in others, the more timidly frigid his efforts at faultless style. It would be the same with the most skilful author, if the Ghost of the Public had not long since ceased to haunt him. While he writes, the true author's solitude is absolute or peopled at his will. But take an audience from an orator, what is he? He commands the living Public—the Ghost of the Public awes himself.

"Surely once," sighed Darrell, as he gave his blurred pages to the flames—"surely once I had some pittance of the author's talent, and have spent it upon lawsuits!"

The author's talent, no doubt, Guy Darrell once had—the author's temperament, never. What is the author's temperament? Too long a task to define. But without it a man may write a clever book, an useful book, a book that may live a year, ten years, fifty years. He will not stand out to distant ages a representative of the age that rather lived in him than he in it. The author's temperament is that which makes him an integral, earnest, original unity, distinct from all before and all that may succeed him. And as a Father of the Church has said that the consciousness of individual being is the sign of immortality, not granted to the inferior creatures—so it is in this individual temperament, one and indivisible, and in the intense conviction of it, more than in all the works it may throw off, that the author becomes immortal. Nay, his works may perish like those of Orpheus or

Pythagoras;* but he himself, in his name, in the footprint of his being, remains, like Orpheus or Pythagoras, undestroyed, indestructible.

Resigning literature, the Solitary returned to science. There he was more at home. He had cultivated science, in his dazzling academical career, with ardor and success; he had renewed the study, on his first retirement to Fawley, as a distraction from tormenting memories or unextinguished passions. He now for the first time regarded the absorbing abstruse occupation as a possible source of fame. To be one in the starry procession of those sons of light who have solved a new law in the statute-book of heaven! Surely a grand ambition, not unbecoming to his years and station, and pleasant in its labors to a man who loved Nature's outward scenery with poetic passion, and had studied her inward mysteries with a sage's minute research. Science needs not the author's art—she reject its graces—she recoils with a shudder from its fancies. But science requires in the mind of the discoverer a limpid calm. The lightnings that reveal Diespiter must flash in serene skies. No clouds store that thunder—

> "Quo bruta tellus, et vaga flumina,
> Quo Styx, et invisi horrida Tænari
> Sedes, Atlanteusque finis
> Concutitur!"

So long as you take science only as a distraction, science will not lead you to discovery. And from some cause or other, Guy Darrell was more unquiet and perturbed in his present than in his past seclusion. Science this time failed even to distract. In the midst of august meditations — of close experiment — some haunting angry thought from the far world passed with rude shadow between Intellect and Truth — the heart eclipsed the mind. The fact is, that Darrell's genius was essentially formed for Action. His was the true orator's temperament, with the qualities that belong to it—the grasp of affairs—the comprehension of men and states—the constructive, administrative faculties. In such career, and in such career alone, could he have developed all his powers, and achieved an imperishable name. Gradually as science lost its interest, he retreated from all his former occupations, and would wander for long hours over the wild unpopulated landscapes round him. As if it were his object to fatigue the body, and in that fatigue tire out the restless brain, he would make his gun the excuse for rambles from sunrise to twilight over the manors he had purchased years ago, lying many miles off from Fawley. There are times when a man who has passed his life in cultivating his mind, finds that the more he can make the physical existence predominate, the more he can lower himself to the rude vigor of his gamekeeper, or his day-laborer—why, the more he can harden his nerves to support the weight of his reflections.

In these rambles he was not always alone. Fairthorn contrived to insinuate himself much more than formerly into his master's habitual companionship. The faithful fellow had missed Darrell so sorely in that long unbroken absence of five years, that on recovering him, Fairthorn seemed resolved to make up for lost time. Departing from his own habits, he would, therefore, lie in wait for Guy Darrell—creeping out of a bramble or bush, like a familiar sprite; and was no longer to be awed away by a curt syllable or a contracted brow. And Darrell, at first submitting reluctantly, and out of compassionate kindness, to the flute-player's obstrusive society, became by degrees to welcome and relax in it. Fairthorn knew the great secrets of his life. To Fairthorn alone on all earth could he speak without reserve of one name and of one sorrow. Speaking to Fairthorn was like talking to himself, or to his pointers, or to his favorite doe, upon which last he bestowed a new collar, with an inscription that implied more of the true cause that had driven him a second time to the shades of Fawley that he would have let out to Alban Morley or even to Lionel Haughton. Alban was too old for that confidence—Lionel much too young. But the Musician, like Art itself, was of no age; and if ever the gloomy master unbent his outward moodiness and secret spleen in any approach to gaiety, it was in a sort of saturnine playfulness to this grotesque, grown-up infant.

They cheered each other, and they teased each other. Stalking side by side over the ridged fallows, Darrell would sometimes pour forth his whole soul, as a poet does to his muse; and at Fairthorn's abrupt interruption

* It need scarcely be said that the works ascribed to Orpheus or Pythagoras, are generally allowed not to be genuine.

or rejoinder, turn round on him with fierce objurgation or withering sarcasm, or what the flute-player abhorred more than all else, a truculent quotation from Horace, which drove Fairthorn away into some vanishing covert or hollow, out of which Darrell had to entice him, sure that, in return, Fairthorn would take a sly occasion to send into his side a vindictive prickle. But as the two came home in the starlight, the dogs dead beat and poor Fairthorn too,—ten to one but what the musician was leaning all his weight on his master's nervous arm, and Darrell was looking with tender kindness in the face of the SOME ONE left to lean upon him still.

One evening, as they were sitting together in the library, the two hermits, each in his corner, and after a long silence the flute-player said abruptly—

"I have been thinking—"

"Thinking!" quoth Darrell, with his mechanical irony; "I am sorry for you. Try not to do so again."

FAIRTHORN.—"Your poor dear father—"

DARRELL (wincing, startled, and expectant of a prickle).—"Eh? my father—"

FAIRTHORN. — "Was a great antiquary. How it would have pleased him could he have left a fine collection of antiquities as an heirloom to the nation!—his name thus preserved for ages, and connected with the studies of his life. There are the Elgin Marbles. The parson was talking to me yesterday of a new Vernon Gallery; why not in the British Museum an everlasting Darrell room? Plenty to stock it mouldering yonder in the chambers which you will never finish."

"My dear Dick," said Darrell, starting up, "give me your hand. What a brilliant thought! I could do nothing else to preserve my dear father's name. *Eureka!* You are right. Set the carpenters at work to-morrow. Remove the boards; open the chambers; we will inspect their stores, and select what would worthily furnish 'A Darrell Room.' Perish Guy Darrell the lawyer! Philip Darrell the antiquary at least shall live!"

It is marvellous with what charm Fairthorn's lucky idea seized upon Darrell's mind. The whole of the next day he spent in the forlorn skeleton of the unfinished mansion slowly decaying beside his small and homely dwelling. The pictures, many of which were the rarest originals in early Flemish and Italian art, were dusted with tender care, and hung from hasty nails upon the bare ghastly walls. Delicate ivory carvings, wrought by the matchless hand of Cellini—early Florentine bronzes—priceless specimens of Raffaelle ware and Venetian glass—the precious trifles, in short, which the collector of mediæval curiosities amasses for his heirs to disperse among the palaces of kings and the cabinets of nations — were dragged again to unfamiliar light. The invaded sepulchral building seemed a very Pompeii of the *Cinque Cento*. To examine, arrange, methodize, select for national purposes, such miscellaneous treasures would be the work of weeks. For easier access, Darrell caused a slight hasty passage to be thrown over the gap between the two edifices. It ran from the room niched into the gables of the old house, which, originally fitted up for scientific studies, now became his habitual apartment, into the largest of the uncompleted chambers which had been designed for the grand reception-gallery of the new building.

Into the pompous gallery thus made contiguous to his monk-like cell, he gradually gathered the choicest specimens of his collection. The damps were expelled by fires on grateless hearthstones; sunshine admitted from windows now for the first time exchanging boards for glass; rough iron sconces, made at the nearest forge, were thrust into the walls, and sometimes lighted at night—Darrell and Fairthorn walking arm-in-arm along the unpolished floors, in company with Holbein's Nobles, Perugino's Virgins. Some of that highbred company displaced and banished the next day, as repeated inspection made the taste more rigidly exclusive. Darrell had found object, amusement, occupation—frivolous if compared with those lenses, and glasses, and algebraical scrawls which had once whiled lonely hours in the attic-room hard by; but not frivolous even to the judgment of the austerest sage, if that sage had not reasoned away his heart. For here it was not Darrell's taste that was delighted; it was Darrell's heart that, ever hungry, had found food. His heart was connecting those long-neglected memorials of an ambition baffled and relinquished—here with a nation, there with his father's grave! How his eyes sparkled! how his lip smiled! Nobody would have guessed it—none of us

know each other; least of all do we know the interior being of those whom we estimate by public repute;—but what a world of simple, fond affection, lay coiled and wasted in that proud man's solitary breast!

CHAPTER II.

The learned compute that seven hundred and seven millions of millions of vibrations have penetrated the eye before the eye can distinguish the tints of a violet. What philosophy can calculate the vibrations of the heart before it can distinguish the colors of love?

While Guy Darrell thus passed his hours within the unfinished fragments of a dwelling builded for posterity, and amongst the still relics of remote generations, Love and Youth were weaving their warm eternal idyll on the sunny lawns by the gliding river.

There they are, Love and Youth, Lionel and Sophy, in the arbor round which her slight hands have twined the honeysuckle, fond imitation of that bower endeared by the memory of her earliest holiday—she seated coyly, he on the ground at her feet, as when Titania had watched his sleep. He has been reading to her, the book has fallen from his hand. What book? That volume of poems so unintelligibly obscure to all but the dreaming young, who are so unintelligibly obscure to themselves. But to the merit of those poems, I doubt if even George did justice. It is not true, I believe, that they are not durable. Some day or other, when all the jargon so feelingly denounced by Colonel Morley, about "æsthetics," and "objective," and "subjective," has gone to its long home some critic who can write English will probably bring that poor little volume fairly before the public; and, with all its manifold faults, it will take a place in the affections, not of one single generation of the young, but—everlasting, ever-dreaming, ever-growing youth.

But you and I, reader, have no other interest in these poems, except this—that they were written by the brother-in-law of that whimsical, miserly Frank Vance, who perhaps, but for such a brother-in-law, would never have gone through the labor by which he has cultivated the genius that achieved his fame; and if he had not cultivated that genius, he might never have known Lionel; and if he had never known Lionel, Lionel might never perhaps have gone to the Surrey village, in which he saw the Phenomenon: and, to push farther still that Voltaireian philosophy of ifs—if either Lionel or Frank Vance had not been so intimately associated in the minds of Sophy and Lionel with the golden holiday on the beautiful river, Sophy and Lionel might not have thought so much of those poems; and if they had not thought so much of those poems, there might not have been between them that link of poetry without which the love of two young people is a sentiment, always very pretty, it is true, but much too commonplace to deserve special commemoration in a work so uncommonly long as this is likely to be. And thus it is clear that Frank Vance is not a superfluous and episodical personage amongst the characters of this history, but, however indirectly, still essentially, one of those beings without whom the author must have given a very different answer to the question, "What will he do with it?"

Return we to Lionel and Sophy. The poems have brought their hearts nearer and nearer together. And when the book fell from Lionel's hand, Sophy knew that his eyes were on her face, and her own eyes looked away. And the silence was so deep and so sweet! Neither had yet said to the other a word of love. And in that silence both felt that they loved and were beloved. Sophy! how childlike she looked still! How little she is changed!—except that the soft blue eyes are far more pensive, and that her merry laugh is now never heard. In that luxurious home, fostered with the tenderest care by its charming owner, the romance of her childhood realized, and Lionel by her side, she misses the old crippled vagrant. And therefore it is that her merry laugh is no longer heard! "Ah!" said Lionel, softly breaking the pause at length, "Do not turn your eyes from me, or I shall think that there are tears in them!" Sophy's breast heaved, but her eyes were averted still. Lionel rose gently, and came to the other side of her quiet form. "Fie! there *are* tears, and you would hide them from me. Ungrateful!"

Sophy looked at him now with candid, inexpressible, guileless affection in those swimming eyes, and said with touching sweetness, "Un-

grateful! Should I not be so if I were gay and happy?"

And in self-reproach for not being sufficiently unhappy while that young consoler was by her side, she too rose, left the arbor, and looked along the river. George Morley was wistfully expected; he might bring tidings of the absent. And now while Lionel, rejoining her, exerts all his eloquence to allay her anxiety and encourage her hopes, and while they thus, in that divinest stage of love, ere the tongue repeats what the eyes have told, glide along—here in the sunlight by lingering flowers—there in shadow under mournful willows, whose leaves are ever the latest to fall, let us explain by what links of circumstance Sophy became the great lady's guest, and Waife once more a homeless wanderer.

CHAPTER III.

Comprising many needful explanations illustrative of wise saws, as for example, "He that hath an ill name is half hanged." "He that hath been bitten by a serpent is afraid of a rope." "He that looks for a star puts out his candles;" and, "When God wills, all winds bring rain."

THE reader has been already made aware how, by an impulse of womanhood and humanity, Arabella Crane had been converted from a persecuting into a tutelary agent in the destinies of Waife and Sophy. That revolution in her moral being dated from the evening on which she had sought the cripple's retreat, to warn him of Jasper's designs. We have seen by what stratagem she had made it appear that Waife and his grandchild had sailed beyond the reach of molestation; with what liberality she had advanced the money that freed Sophy from the manager's claim; and how considerately she had empowered her agent to give the reference which secured to Waife the asylum in which we last beheld him. In a few stern sentences she had acquainted Waife with her fearless inflexible resolve to associate her fate henceforth with the life of his lawless son; and, by rendering abortive all his evil projects of plunder, to compel him at last to depend upon her for an existence neither unsafe nor sordid, provided only that it were not dishonest. The moment that she revealed that design, Waife's trust in her was won. His own heart enabled him to comprehend the effect produced upon a character otherwise unamiable and rugged, by the grandeur of self-immolation and the absorption of one devoted heroic thought.

In the strength and bitterness of passion which thus pledged her existence to redeem another's, he obtained the key to her vehement and jealous nature; saw why she had been so cruel to the child of a rival; why she had conceived compassion for that child in proportion as the father's unnatural indifference had quenched the anger of her own self-love; and, above all, why, as the idea of reclaiming and appropriating solely to herself the man who, for good or for evil, had grown into the all-predominant object of her life, gained more and more the mastery over her mind, it expelled the lesser and the baser passions, and the old mean revenge against an infant faded away before the light of that awakening conscience which is often rekindled from ashes by the sparks of a single better and worthier thought. And in the resolute design to reclaim Jasper Losely, Arabella came at once to a ground in common with his father, with his child. Oh what, too, would the old man owe to her, what would be his gratitude, his joy, if she not only guarded his spotless Sophy, but saved from the bottomless abyss his guilty son! Thus when Arabella Crane had, nearly five years before, sought Waife's discovered hiding-place, near the old bloodstained Tower, mutual interests and sympathies had formed between them a bond of alliance not the less strong because rather tacitly acknowledged than openly expressed.

Arabella had written to Waife from the Continent, for the first half-year pretty often, and somewhat sanguinely, as to the chance of Losely's ultimate reformation. Then the intervals of silence became gradually more prolonged, and the letters more brief. But still, whether from the wish not unnecessarily to pain the old man, or, as would be more natural to her character, which, even in its best aspects, was not gentle, from a proud dislike to confess failure, she said nothing of the evil courses which Jasper had renewed. Evidently she was always near him. Evidently, by some means or another, his life, furtive and dark, was ever under the glare of her watchful eyes.

Meanwhile Sophy had been presented to Caroline Montfort. As Waife had so fondly

anticipated, the lone childless lady had taken with kindness and interest to the fair motherless child. Left to herself often for months together in the grand forlorn house, Caroline soon found an object to her pensive walks in the basket-maker's cottage. Sophy's charming face and charming ways stole more and more into affections which were denied all nourishment at home. She entered into Waife's desire to improve, by education, so exquisite a nature; and, familiarity growing by degrees, Sophy was at length coaxed up to the great house; and during the hours which Waife devoted to his rambles (for even in his settled industry he could not conquer his vagrant tastes, but would weave his reeds or osiers as he sauntered through solitudes of turf or wood), became the docile delighted pupil in the simple chintz room which Lady Montfort had reclaimed from the desert of her surrounding palace. Lady Montfort was not of a curious turn of mind; profoundly indifferent even to the gossip of drawing-rooms, she had no rankling desire to know the secrets of village hearthstones. Little acquainted even with the great world—scarcely at all with any world below that in which she had her being, save as she approached humble sorrows by delicate charity—the contrast between Waife's calling and his conversation roused in her no vigilant suspicions. A man of some education, and born in a rank that touched upon the order of gentleman, but of no practical or professional culture—with whimsical tastes—with roving eccentric habits—had, in the course of life, picked up much harmless wisdom, but, perhaps from want of worldly prudence, failed of fortune. Contented with an obscure retreat and a humble livelihood, he might yet naturally be loath to confide to others the painful history of a descent in life. He might have relations in a higher sphere, whom the confession would shame; he might be silent in the manly pride which shrinks from alms and pity and a tale of fall. Nay, grant the worst—grant that Waife had suffered in repute as well as fortune—grant that his character had been tarnished by some plausible circumstantial evidences which he could not explain away to the satisfaction of friends or the acquittal of a short-sighted world—had there not been, were there not always, many innocent men similarly afflicted? And who could hear Waife talk, or look on his arch smile, and not feel that he was innocent? So, at least, thought Caroline Montfort. Naturally; for if, in her essentially woman-like character, there was one all-pervading and all-predominant attribute, it was PITY.

Had Fate placed her under circumstances fitted to ripen into genial development all her exquisite forces of soul, her true post in this life would have been that of the SOOTHER. What a child to some grief-worn father! What a wife to some toiling, aspiring sensitive man of genius! What a mother to some suffering child! It seemed as if it were necessary to her to have something to compassionate and foster. She was sad when there was no one to comfort; but her smile was like a sunbeam from Eden when it chanced on a sorrow it could brighten away. Out of this very sympathy came her faults—faults of reasoning and judgment. Prudent in her own chilling path through what the world calls temptations, because so ineffably pure—because, to Fashion's light tempters, her very thought was as closed, as

"Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,"

was the ear of Sabrina to the comrades of Comus,—yet place before her some gentle scheme that seemed fraught with a blessing for others, and straightway her fancy embraced it, prudence faded—she saw not the obstacles, weighed not the chances against it. Charity to her did not come alone, but with its sister twins, Hope and Faith.

Thus, benignly for the old man and the fair child, years rolled on till Lord Montfort's sudden death, and his widow was called upon to exchange Montfort Court (which passed to the new heir) for the distant jointure House of Twickenham. By this time she had grown so attached to Sophy, and Sophy so gratefully fond of her, that she proposed to Waife to take his sweet grandchild as her permanent companion, complete her education, and assure her future. This had been the old man's cherished day-dream; but he had not contemplated its realization until he himself were in the grave. He turned pale, he staggered, when the proposal which would separate him from his grandchild was first brought before him. But he recovered ere Lady Montfort

could be aware of the acuteness of the pang she inflicted, and accepted the generous offer with warm protestations of joy and gratitude. But Sophy! Sophy consent to leave her grandfather afar and aged in his solitary cottage! Little did either of them know Sophy, with her soft heart and determined soul, if they supposed such egotism possible in her. Waife insisted—Waife was angry—Waife was authoritative—Waife was imploring—Waife was pathetic—all in vain! But to close every argument, the girl went boldly to Lady Montfort, and said, "If I left him, his heart would break—never ask it." Lady Montfort kissed Sophy tenderly as mother ever kissed a child for some sweet loving trait of a noble nature, and said simply, "But he shall not be left—he shall come too."

She offered Waife rooms in her Twickenham house—she wished to collect books—he should be librarian. The old man shivered and refused—refused firmly. He had made a vow not to be a guest in any house. Finally, the matter was compromised; Waife would remove to the neighborhood of Twickenham; there hire a cottage; there ply his art; and Sophy, living with him, should spend a part of each day with Lady Montfort as now.

So it was resolved. Waife consented to occupy a small house on the verge of the grounds belonging to the jointure villa, on the condition of paying rent for it. And George Morley insisted on the privilege of preparing that house for his old teacher's reception, leaving it simple and rustic to outward appearance, but fitting its pleasant chambers with all that his knowledge of the old man's tastes and habits suggested for comfort or humble luxury; a room for Sophy, hung with the prettiest paper, all butterflies and flowers, commanding a view of the river. Waife, despite his proud scruples, could not refuse such gifts from a man whose fortune and career had been secured by his artful lessons. Indeed he had already permitted George to assist, though not largely, his own efforts to repay the £100 advanced by Mrs. Crane. The years he had devoted to a craft which his ingenuity made lucrative, had just enabled the basket-maker with his pupil's aid, to clear off that debt by installments. He had the satisfaction of thinking that it was his industry that had replaced the sum to which his grandchild owed her release from the execrable Rugge.

Lady Montfort's departure (which preceded Waife's by some weeks) was more mourned by the poor in her immediate neighborhood than by the wealthier families who composed what a province calls its society; and the gloom which that event cast over the little village round the kingly mansion, was increased when Waife and his grandchild left.

For the last three years, emboldened by Lady Montfort's protection, and the conviction that he was no longer pursued or spied, the old man had relaxed his earlier reserved and secluded habits. Constitutionally sociable, he had made acquaintance with his humbler neighbors; lounged by their cottage-palings in his rambles down the lanes; diverted their children with Sir Isaac's tricks, or regaled them with nuts and apples from his little orchard; giving to the more diligent laborers many a valuable hint how to eke out the daily wage with garden produce, or bees, or poultry; doctored farmers' cows; and even won the heart of the stud-groom by a mysterious sedative ball, which had reduced to serene docility a highly nervous and hitherto unmanageable four-year-old. Sophy had been no less popular. No one grudged her the favor of Lady Montfort—no one wondered at it. They were loved and honored. Perhaps the happiest years Waife had known since his young wife left the earth, were passed in the hamlet which he fancied her shade haunted; for was it not there—there, in that cottage—there, in sight of those green osiers, that her first modest virgin replies to his letters of love and hope had soothed his confinement and animated him—till then little fond of sedentary toils—to the very industry which, learned in sport, now gave subsistence, and secured a home.

To that home persecution had not come—gossip had not pryed into its calm seclusion—even chance, when threatening disclosure, had seemed to pass by innocuous. For once—a year or so before he left—an incident had occurred which alarmed him at the time, but led to no annoying results. The banks of the great sheet of water in Montfort Park were occasionally made the scene of rural pic-nics by the families of neighboring farmers or tradesmen. One day Waife, while carelessly fashion-

ing his baskets on his favorite spot, was recognized, on the opposite margin, by a party of such holiday-makers to whom he himself had paid no attention. He was told the next day by the landlady of the villiage inn, the main chimney of which he had undertaken to cure of smoking, that a "lady" in the pic-nic symposium of the day before had asked many questions about him and his grandchild, and had seemed pleased to hear they were both so comfortably settled.

The "lady" had been accompanied by another "lady," and by two or three young gentlemen. They had arrived in a "buss," which they had hired for the occasion. They had come from Humberston the day after those famous races which annually filled Humberston with strangers—the time of year in which Rugge's grand theatrical exhibition delighted that ancient town. From the description of the two ladies Waife suspected that they belonged to Rugge's company. But they had not claimed Waife as a *ci-devant* comrade; they had not spoken of Sophy as the Phenomenon or the Fugitive. No molestation followed this event; and, after all, the Remorseless Baron had no longer any claim to the Persecuted Bandit or to Juliet Araminta.

But the ex-comedian is gone from the osiers—the hamlet. He is in his new retreat by the lordly river—within an hour of the smoke and roar of tumultuous London. He tries to look cheerful and happy, but his repose is troubled—his heart is anxious. Ever since Sophy, on his account, refused the offer which would have transferred her, not for a few daily hours, but for habitual life, from a basket-maker's roof to all the elegancies and refinements of a sphere in which, if freed from him, her charms and virtues might win her some such alliance as seemed impossible, while he was thus dragging her down to his own level,—ever since that day the old man had said to himself, "I live too long." While Sophy was by his side he appeared busy at his work, and merry in his humor; the moment she left him for Lady Montfort's house, the work dropped from his hands, and he sank into moody thought.

Waife had written to Mrs. Crane (her address then was at Paris) on removing to Twickenham, and begged her to warn him should Jasper meditate a return to England, by a letter directed to him at the General Post-Office, London. Despite his later trust in Mrs. Crane, he did not deem it safe to confide to her Lady Montfort's offer to Sophy, or the affectionate nature of that lady's intimacy with the girl now grown into womanhood. With that insight into the human heart, which was in him not so habitually clear and steadfast as to be always useful, but at times singularly if erratically lucid, he could not feel assured that Arabella Crane's ancient hate to Sophy (which, lessening in proportion to the girl's destitution, had only ceased when the stern woman felt, with a sentiment bordering on revenge, that it was to her that Sophy owed an asylum obscure and humble) might not revive, if she learned that the child of a detested rival was raised above the necessity of her protection, and brought within view of that station so much loftier than her own, from which she had once rejoiced to know that the offspring of a marriage which had darkened her life was excluded.

For indeed it had been only on Waife's promise that he would not repeat the attempt that had proved so abortive, to enforce Sophy's claim on Guy Darrell, that Arabella Crane had in the first instance resigned the child to his care. His care—his—an attainted outcast! As long as Arabella Crane could see in Sophy but an object of compassion, she might haughtily protect her; but, could Sophy become an object of envy, would that protection last? No, he did not venture to confide in Mrs. Crane further than to say that he and Sophy had removed from Montfort village to the vicinity of London. Time enough to say more when Mrs. Crane returned to England; and then, not by letter, but in personal interview.

Once a month the old man went to London to inquire at the General Post-office for any communications his correspondent might there address to him. Only once, however, had he heard from Mrs. Crane since the announcement of his migration, and her note of reply was extremely brief, until in the fatal month of June, when Guy Darrell and Jasper Losely had alike returned, and on the same day, to the metropolis; and then the old man received from her a letter which occcasioned him profound alarm.

It apprised him not only that his terrible

son was in England—in London; but that Jasper had discovered that the persons embarked for America were not the veritable Waife and Sophy, whose names they had assumed. Mrs. Crane ended with these ominous words:—"It is right to say now that he has descended deeper and deeper. Could you see him, you would wonder that I neither abandon him nor my resolve. He hates me worse than the gibbet. To me and not to the gibbet he shall pass—fitting punishment to both. I am in London, not in my old house, but near him. His confidant is my hireling. His life and his projects are clear to my eyes—clear as if he dwelt in glass. Sophy is now of an age in which, were she placed in the care of some person whose respectability could not be impugned, she could not be legally forced away against her will; but if under your roof, those whom Jasper has induced to institute a search, that he has no means to institute very actively himself, might make statements which (as you are already aware) might persuade others though well-meaning, to assist him in separating her from you. He might publicly face even a police-court, if he thus hoped to shame the rich man into buying off an intolerable scandal. He might, in the first instance, and more probably, decoy her into his power through stealth; and what might become of her before she was recovered? Separate yourself from her for a time. It is you, notwithstanding your arts of disguise, that can be the more easily tracked. She, now almost a woman, will have grown out of recognition. Place her in some secure asylum until, at least, you hear from me again."

Waife read and re-read this epistle (to which there was no direction that enabled him to reply) in the private room of a litttle coffee-house to which he had retired from the gaze and pressure of the streets. The determination he had long brooded over now began to take shape—to be hurried on to prompt decision. On recovering his first shock, he formed and matured his plans. That same evening he saw Lady Montfort. He felt that the time had come when, for Sophy's sake, he must lift the veil from the obloquy on his own name. To guard against the same concession to Jasper's authority that had betrayed her at Gatesboro', it was necessary that he should explain the mystery of Sophy's parentage and position to Lady Montfort, and go through the anguish of denouncing his own son as the last person to whose hands she should be consigned. He approached this subject not only with a sense of profound humiliation, but with no unreasonable fear lest Lady Montfort might at once decline a charge which would possibly subject her retirement to a harassing invasion.

But, to his surprise as well as relief, no sooner had he named Sophy's parentage than Lady Montfort evinced emotions of a joy which cast into the shade all more painful or discreditable associations. "Henceforth, believe me," she said, "Your Sophy shall be my own child, my own treasured darling!—no humble companion—my equal as well as my charge. Fear not that any one shall tear her from me. You are right in thinking that my roof should be her home—that she should have the rearing and the station which she is entitled as well as fitted to adorn. But you must not part from her. I have listened to your tale; my experience of you supplies the defence you suppress—it reverses the judgment which has aspersed you. And, more ardently than before, I press on you a refuge in the Home that will shelter your grandchild." Noble-hearted woman! and nobler for her ignorance of the practical world, in the proposal which would have blistered with scorching blushes the cheek of that Personification of all "Solemn Plausibilities," the House of Vipont! Gentleman Waife was not scamp enough to profit by the ignorance which sprang from generous virtue.

But, repressing all argument, and appearing to acquiesce in the possibility of such an arrangement, he left her benevolent delight unsaddened—and before the morning he was gone. Gone in stealth, and by the starlight, as he had gone years ago from the bailiff's cottage—gone, for Sophy, in waking, to find, as she had found before, farewell lines, that commended hope and forbade grief. "It was," he wrote, "for both their sakes that he had set out on a tour of pleasant adventure. He needed it; he had felt his spirits droop of late in so humdrum and settled a life. And there was danger abroad—danger that his brief absence would remove. He had confided all his secrets to Lady Montfort; she must look on that kind lady as her sole guardian till he

return—as return he surely would; and then they would live happy ever afterwards as in fairy tales. He should never forgive her if she were silly enough to fret for him. He should not be alone; Sir Isaac would take care of him. He was not without plenty of money—savings of several months; if he wanted more, he would apply to George Morley.

He would write to her occasionally; but she must not expect frequent letters; he might be away for months—what did that signify? He was old enough to take care of himself; she was no longer a child to cry her eyes out if she lost a senseless toy, or a stupid old cripple. She was a young lady, and he expected to find her a famous scholar when he returned." And so, with all flourish and bravado, and suppressing every attempt at pathos, the old man went his way, and Sophy, hurrying to Lady Montfort's, weeping, distracted, imploring her to send in all directions to discover and bring back the fugitive, was there detained a captive guest. But Waife left a letter also for Lady Montfort, cautioning and adjuring her, as she valued Sophy's safety from the scandal of Jasper's claim, not to make any imprudent attempts to discover him. Such attempt would only create the very publicity from the chance of which he was seeking to escape. The necessity of this caution was so obvious that Lady Montfort could only send her most confidential servant to inquire guardedly in the neighborhood, until she had summoned George Morley from Humberston, and taken him into counsel.

Waife had permitted her to relate to him, on strict promise of secresy, the tale he had confided to her. George entered with the deepest sympathy into Sophy's distress; but he made her comprehend the indiscretion and peril of any noisy researches. He promised that he himself would spare no pains to ascertain the old man's hiding-place, and see, at least, if he could not be persuaded either to return or suffer her to join him, that he was not left destitute and comfortless. Nor was this an idle promise. George, though his inquiries were unceasing, crippled by the restraint imposed on them, was so acute in divining, and so active in following up each clue to the wanderer's artful doublings, that more than once he had actually come upon the track, and found the very spot where Waife or Sir Isaac had been seen a few days before. Still, up to the day on which Morley had last reported progress, the ingenious ex-actor, fertile in all resources of stratagem and disguise, had baffled his research.

At first, however, Waife had greatly relieved the minds of these anxious friends, and cheered even Sophy's heavy heart, by letters, gay though brief. These letters having, by their postmarks, led to his trace, he had stated, in apparent anger, that reason for discontinuing them. And for the last six weeks no line from him had been received. In fact, the old man, on resolving to consummate his self-abnegation, strove more and more to wean his grandchild's thoughts from his image. He deemed it so essential to her whole future, that, now she had found a home in so secure and so elevated a sphere, she should gradually accustom herself to a new rank of life, from which he was an everlasting exile; should lose all trace of his very being; efface a connection that, ceasing to protect, could henceforth only harm and dishonor her; that he tried, as it were, to blot himself out of the world which now smiled on her. He did not underrate her grief in its first freshness; he knew that, could she learn where he was, all else would be forgotten—she would insist on flying to him. But he continually murmured to himself, "Youth is ever proverbially short of memory; its sorrow poignant, but not enduring; now the wounds are already scarring over—they will not reopen if they are left to heal."

He had, at first, thought of hiding somewhere not so far but that once a-week, or once a-month, he might have stolen into the grounds, looked at the house that held her—left, perhaps, in her walks some little token of himself. But, on reflection, he felt that that luxury would be too imprudent, and it ceased to tempt him in proportion as he reasoned himself into the stern wisdom of avoiding all that could revive her grief for him. At the commencement of this tale, in the outline given of that grand melo-drama in which Juliet Araminta played the part of the Bandit's Child, her efforts to decoy pursuit from the lair of the persecuted Mime were likened to the arts of the skylark to lure eye and hand from the nest of its young. More appropriate that illustration now to the parent-bird than then to the fledgling. Farther and farther from the nest

in which all his love was centred fled the old man. What if Jasper did discover him now; that very discovery would mislead the pursuit from Sophy. Most improbable that Losely would ever guess that they could become separated; still more improbable, unless Waife, imprudently lurking near her home, guided conjecture, that Losely should dream of seeking under the roof of the lofty peeress the child that had fled from Mr. Rugge.

Poor old man! his heart was breaking; but his soul was so brightly comforted, that there, where many, many long miles off, I see him standing, desolate and patient, in the corner of yon crowded market-place, holding Sir Isaac by slackened string, with listless hand—Sir Isaac unshorn, travel-stained, draggled, with drooping head and melancholy eyes—yea, as I see him there, jostled by the crowd, to whom, now and then, pointing to that huge pannier on his arm, filled with some homely pedlar wares, he mechanically mutters, "Buy"—yea, I say, verily, as I see him thus, I cannot draw near in pity—I see what the crowd does not—the shadow of an angel's wing over his gray head; and I stand reverentially aloof, with bated breath and bended knee.

CHAPTER IV.

A woman too often reasons from her heart—hence two-thirds of her mistakes and her troubles. A man of genius, too, often reasons from his heart—hence, also, two-thirds of his troubles and mistakes. Wherefore, between woman and genius there is a sympathetic affinity; each has some intuitive comprehension of the secrets of the other, and the more feminine the woman, the more exquisite the genius, the more subtle the intelligence between the two. But note well that this tacit understanding becomes obscured, if human love pass across its relations. Shakespeare interprets aright the most intricate riddles in woman. A woman was the first to interpret aright the art that is latent in Shakespeare. But did Anne Hathaway and Shakespeare understand each other?

UNOBSERVED by the two young people, Lady Montford sate watching them as they moved along the river banks. She was seated where Lionel had first seen her—in the kind of grassy chamber that had been won from the foliage and the sward, closed round with interlaced autumnal branches, save where it opened towards the water. If ever woman's brain can conceive and plot a scheme thoroughly pure from one ungentle, selfish thread in its web, in such a scheme had Caroline Montfort brought together those two fair young natures. And yet they were not uppermost in her thoughts as she now gazed on them; nor was it wholly for them that her eyes were filled with tears at once sweet, yet profoundly mournful—holy, and yet intensely human.

Women love to think themselves uncomprehended — not often without reason in that foible; for man, however sagacious, rarely does entirely comprehend woman, howsoever simple. And in this her sex has the advantage over ours. Our hearts are bare to their eyes, even though they can never know what have been our lives. But we may see every action of their lives, guarded and circumscribed in conventional forms, while their hearts will have many mysteries to which we can never have the key. But, in more than the ordinary sense of the word, Caroline Montfort ever had been a woman uncomprehended. Nor even in her own sex did she possess one confidante. Only the outward leaves of that beautiful flower opened to the sunlight. The leaves round the core were gathered fold upon fold closely as when life itself was in the bud.

As all the years of her wedded existence her heart had been denied the natural household vents, so by some strange and unaccountable chance, her intellect also seemed restrained and pent from its proper freedom and play. During those barren years, she had read—she had pondered—she had enjoyed a commune with those whose minds instruct others, and still her own intelligence, which, in early youth, had been characterized by singular vivacity and brightness, and which Time had enriched with every womanly accomplishment, seemed chilled and objectless. It is not enough that a mind should be cultured—it should have movement as well as culture. Caroline Montfort's lay quiescent, like a beautiful form spell-bound to repose, but not to sleep. Looking on her once, as he stood amongst a crowd whom her beauty dazzled, a poet said, abruptly, "Were my guess not a sacrilege to one so spotless and so haughty, I should say that I had hit on the solution of an enigma that long perplexed me; and in the core of that queen of the lilies, could we strip the leaves folded round it, we should find *Remorse*."

Lady Montfort started; the shadow of another form than her own fell upon the sward. George Morley stood behind her, his finger on his lips. "Hush," he said in a whisper, "see, Sophy is looking for me up the river. I knew she would be—I stole this way on purpose—for I would speak to you before I face her questions."

"What is the matter? you alarm me," said Lady Montfort, on gaining a part of the grounds more remote from the river, to which George had silently led the way.

"Nay, my dear cousin, there is less cause for alarm than for anxious deliberation, and that upon more matters than those which directly relate to our poor fugitive. You know that I long shrunk from enlisting the police in aid of our search. I was too sensible of the pain and offence which such an application would occasion Waife—(let us continue so to call him)—and the discovery of it might even induce him to put himself beyond our reach, and quit England. But his prolonged silence, and my fears lest some illness or mishap might have befallen him, together with my serious apprehensions of the effect which unrelieved anxiety might produce on Sophy's health, made me resolve to waive former scruples. Since I last saw you I have applied to one of the higher police-officers accustomed to confidential investigations of a similar nature. The next day he came to tell me that he had learned that a friend of his, who had been formerly a distinguished agent in the detective police, had been engaged for months in tracking a person whom he conjectured to be the same as the one whom I had commissioned him to discover, and with somewhat less caution and delicacy that I had enjoined.

"The fugitive's real name had been given to this ex-agent—the cause for search, that he had abducted and was concealing his granddaughter from her father. It was easy for me to perceive why this novel search had hitherto failed, no suspicion being entertained that Waife had separated himself from Sophy, and the inquiry being therefore rather directed towards the grandchild than the grandfather. But that inquiry had altogether ceased of late, and for this terrible reason—a different section of the police had fixed its eye upon the father on whose behalf the search had been instituted. This Jasper Losely (ah! our poor friend might well shudder to think Sophy should fall into his hands!) haunts the resorts of the most lawless and formidable desperadoes of London. He appears to be a kind of authority amongst them; but there is no evidence that as yet he has committed himself to any participation in their habitual courses. He lives profusely, for a person in society (regaling Daredevils, whom he awes by a strength and courage which are described as extraordinary), but without any visible means.

"It seems that the ex-agent, who had been thus previously employed in Jasper Losely's name, had been engaged, not by Jasper himself, but by a person in very respectable circumstances, whose name I have ascertained to be Poole. And the ex-agent deemed it right to acquaint this Mr. Poole with Jasper's evil character and ambiguous mode of life, and to intimate to his employer that it might not be prudent to hold any connection with such a man, and still less proper to assist in restoring a young girl to his care. On this Mr. Poole became so much agitated, and expressed himself so incoherently as to his relations with Jasper, that the ex-agent conceived suspicions against Poole himself, and reported the whole circumstances to one of the chiefs of the former service, through whom they reached the very man whom I myself was employing. But this ex-agent, who had, after his last interview with Poole, declined all farther interference, had since then, through a correspondent in a country town, whom he had employed at the first, obtained a clue to my dear old friend's wanderings, more recent, and I think more hopeful, than any I had yet discovered.

You will remember that when questioning Sophy as to any friends in her former life to whom it was probable Waife might have addressed himself, she could think of no one *so* probable as a cobbler named Merle, with whom he and she had once lodged, and of whom he had often spoken to her with much gratitude as having put him in the way of recovering herself, and having shown him a peculiar trustful kindness on that occasion. But you will remember also that I could not find this Merle; he had left the village, near this very place, in which he had spent the greater part of his life—his humble trade having been neglected in consequence of some strange superstitious occupations in which, as

he had grown older, he had become more and more absorbed. He had fallen into poverty, his effects had been sold off; he had gone away no one knew whither. Well, the ex-agent, who had also been directed to this Merle by his employer, had, through his correspondent, ascertained that the cobbler was living at Norwich, where he passed under the name of the Wise Man, and where he was in perpetual danger of being sent to the house of correction as an impostor, dealing in astrology, crystal-seeing, and such silly or nefarious practices. Very odd, indeed, and very melancholy, too," quoth the scholar, lifting up his hands and eyes, "that a man so gifted as our poor friend should ever have cultivated an acquaintance with a cobbler who deals in the Black Art!"

"Sophy has talked to me much about that cobbler," said Lady Montfort, with her sweet half-smile. "It was under his roof that she first saw Lionel Haughton. But though the poor man may be an ignorant enthusiast, he is certainly, by her account, too kind and simple-hearted to be a designing impostor."

GEORGE.—"Possibly. But to go on with my story: A few weeks ago, an elderly lame man, accompanied by a dog, who was evidently poor dear Sir Isaac, lodged two days with Merle at Norwich. On hearing this, I myself went yesterday to Norwich, saw and talked to Merle, and through this man I hope, more easily, delicately, and expeditiously than by any other means, to achieve our object. He evidently can assist us, and, as evidently, Waife has not told him that he is flying from Sophy and friends, but from enemies and persecutors. For Merle, who is impervious to bribes, and who at first was churlish and rude, became softened as my honest affection for the fugitive grew clear to him, and still more when I told him how wretched Sophy was at her Grandfather's disappearance, and that she might fret herself into a decline. And we parted with this promise on his side, that if I would bring down to him either Sophy herself (which is out of the question), or a line from her, which, in referring to any circumstances while under his roof that could only be known to her and himself, should convince him that the letter was from her hand, assuring him that it was for Waife's benefit and at her prayer that he should bestir himself in the search for her grandfather, and that he might implicitly trust to me, he would do all he could to help us. So far, then, so good. But I have now more to say, and that is in reference to Sophy herself. While we are tracking her grandfather, the peril to her is not lessened. Never was that peril thoroughly brought before my eyes until I had heard actually from the police agent the dreadful character and associations of the man who can claim her in a father's name. Waife, it is true, had told you that his son was profligate, spendthrift, lawless—sought her, not from natural affection, but as an instrument to be used, roughly and coarsely, for the purpose of extorting money from Mr. Darrell. But this stops far short of the terrible reality. Imagine the effect on her nerves, so depressed as they now are, nay, on her very life, should this audacious miscreant force himself here and say, 'Come with me, you are my child.' And are we quite sure that out of some refining nobleness of conscience she might not imagine it her duty to obey, and to follow him? The more abject and friendless his condition, the more she might deem it her duty to be by his side. I have studied her from her childhood. She is capable of any error in judgment, if it be made to appear a martyr's devoted self-sacrifice. You may well shudder, my dear cousin. But grant that she were swayed by us and by the argument that so to act would betray and kill her beloved grandfather, still, in resisting this ruffian's paternal authority, what violent and painful scenes might ensue! What dreadful publicity to be attached for ever to her name! Nor is this all. Grant that her father does not discover her, but that he is led by his associates into some criminal offence, and suffers by the law—her relationship, both to him from whom you would guard her, and to him whose hearth you have so tenderly reared her to grace, suddenly dragged to day—would not the shame kill her? And in that disclosure how keen would be the anguish of Darrell!"

"Oh, heavens!" cried Caroline Montfort, white as ashes, and wringing her hands, "you freeze me with terror. But this man cannot be so fallen as you describe. I have seen him—spoken with him in his youth—hoped then to assist in a task of conciliation, pardon. Nothing about him then foreboded so fearful

a corruption. He might be vain, extravagant, selfish, false—Ah, yes! he was false indeed! but still the ruffian you paint, banded with common criminals, cannot be the same as the gay, dainty, perfumed, fair-faced adventurer with whom my ill-fated playmate fled her father's house. You shake your head—what is it you advise?

"To expedite your own project—to make at once the resolute attempt to secure to this poor child her best, her most rightful protector—to let whatever can be done to guard her from danger, or reclaim her father from courses to which despair may be driving him—to let, I say, all this be done by the person whose interest in doing it effectively is so paramount—whose ability to judge of and decide on the wisest means is so immeasurably superior to all that lies within our own limited experience of life."

"But you forget that our friend told me that he had appealed to—to Mr. Darrell on his return to England: that Mr. Darrell had peremptorily refused to credit the claim; and had sternly said that, even if Sophy's birth could be proved, he would not place under his father's roof the grandchild of William Losely."

"True; and yet you hoped reasonably enough to succeed where he, poor outcast, had failed."

"Yes, yes; I did hope that Sophy—her manners formed, her education completed—all her natural equisite graces so cultured and refined, as to justify pride in the proudest kindred—I did hope that she should be brought, as it were by accident, under his notice; that she would interest and charm him; and that the claim, when made, might thus be welcomed with delight. Mr. Darrell's abrupt return to a seclusion so rigid forbids the opportunity that might easily have been found or made if he had remained in London. But suddenly, violently to renew a claim that such a man has rejected, before he has ever seen that dear child—before his heart and his taste plead for her—who would dare to do it? or, if so daring, who could hope success?"

"My dear Lady Montfort, my noble cousin, with repute as spotless as the ermine of your robe—who but you?"

"Who but I? Any one. Mr. Darrell would not even read through a letter addressed to him by me."

George stared with astonishment. Caroline's face was downcast—her attitude that of profound humiliated dejection.

"Incredible!" said he at length. "I have always suspected, and so indeed has my uncle, that Darrell had some cause of complaint against your mother. Perhaps he might have supposed that she had not sufficiently watched over his daughter, or had not sufficiently inquired into the character of the governess whow she recommended to him; and that this had led to an estrangement between Darrell and your mother which could not fail to extend somewhat to yourself. But such misunderstandings can surely now be easily removed. Talk of his not reading a letter addressed to him by you! Why, do I not remember, when I was on a visit to my school-fellow, his son, what influence you, a mere child yourself, had over that grave, busy man, then in the height of his career—how you alone could run without awe into his study—how you alone had the privilege to arrange his books, sort his papers—so that we two boys looked on you with a solemn respect, as the depositary of all his state secrets—how vainly you tried to decoy that poor timid Matilda, his daughter, into a share of your own audacity!—Is not all this true?"

"O yes, yes—old days gone forever!"

"Do I not remember how you promised that, before I went back to school, I should hear Darrell read aloud—how you brought the volume of Milton to him in the evening—how he said, 'No, to-morrow night; I must go now to the House of Commons'—how I marvelled to hear you answer boldly, 'To-morrow night George will have left us, and I have promised that he shall hear you read'—and how, looking at you under those dark brows with serious softness, he said, 'Right: promises, once given, must be kept. But was it not rash to promise in another's name?'—and you answered, half gently, half pettishly, 'As if *you* could fail me!' He took the book without another word, and read. What reading it was too! And do you not remember another time, how—"

Lady Montfort (interrupting with nervous impatience).—"Ay, ay—I need no reminding of all—all! Kindest, noblest, gentlest friend to a giddy, heedless child, unable to appreciate the blessing. But now, George, I dare not, I cannot write to Mr. Darrell."

George mused a moment, and conjectured that Lady Montfort had, in the inconsiderate impulsive season of youth, aided in the clandestine marriage of Darrell's daughter, and had become thus associated in his mind with the affliction that had embittered his existence. Were this so, certainly she would not be the fitting intercessor on behalf of Sophy. His thoughts then turned to his uncle Darrell's earliest friend, not suspecting that Colonel Morley was actually the person whom Darrell had already appointed his adviser and representative, in all transactions that might concern the very parties under discussion. But just as he was about to suggest the expediency of writing to Alban to return to England, and taking him into confidence and consultation, Lady Montfort resumed, in a calmer voice and with a less troubled countenance—

"Who should be the pleader for one whose claim, if acknowledged, would affect his own fortunes, but Lionel Haughton?—Hold!—look where yonder they come into sight—there by the gap in the evergreens. May we not hope that Providence, bringing those two beautiful lives together, gives a solution to the difficulties which thwart our action and embarrass our judgment? I conceived and planned a blissful romance the first moment I gathered from Sophy's artless confidences the effect that had been produced on her whole train of thought and feeling by the first meeting with Lionel in her childhood; by his brotherly, chivalrous kindness, and, above all, by the chance words he let fall, which discontented her with a life of shift and disguise, and revealed to her the instincts of her own honest truthful nature. An alliance between Lionel Haughton and Sophy seemed to me the happiest possible event that could befall Guy Darrell. The two branches of his family united—a painful household secret confined to the circle of his own kindred—granting Sophy's claim never perfectly cleared up, but subject to a tormenting doubt—her future equally assured—her possible rights equally established—Darrell's conscience and pride reconciled to each other. And how, even but as wife to his young kinsman, he would learn to love one so exquisitely endearing!" [Lady Montfort paused a moment, and then resumed]. "When I heard that Mr. Darrell was about to marry again, my project was necessarily arrested."

"Certainly," said George, "if he formed new ties, Sophy would be less an object in his existence, whether or not he recognized her birth. The alliance between her and Lionel would lose many of its advantages; and any address to him on Sophy's behalf would become yet more ungraciously received."

LADY MONTFORT.—"In that case I had resolved to adopt Sophy as my own child; lay by from my abundant income an ample dowry for her; and whether Mr. Darrell ever knew it or not, at least I should have the secret joy to think that I was saving him from the risk of remorse hereafter—should she be, as we believe, his daughter's child, and have been thrown upon the world destitute;—yes, the secret joy of feeling that I was sheltering, fostering as a mother, one whose rightful home might be with him who in my childhood sheltered, fostered me!"

GEORGE (much affected).—"How, in proportion as we know you, the beauty which you veil from the world outshines that which you cannot prevent the world from seeing! But you must not let this grateful enthusiasm blind your better judgment. You think these young persons are beginning to be really attached to each other. Then it is the more necessary that no time should be lost in learning how Mr. Darrell would regard such a marriage. I do not feel so assured of his consent as you appear to do. At all events, this should be ascertained before their happiness is seriously involved. I agree with you that Lionel is the best intermediator to plead for Sophy; and his very generosity in urging her prior claim to a fortune that might otherwise pass to him, is likely to have weight with a man so generous himself as Guy Darrell is held to be. But does Lionel yet know all? Have you yet ventured to confide to him, or even to Sophy herself, the nature of her claim on the man who so proudly denies it?"

"No—I deemed it due to Sophy's pride of sex to imply to her that she would, in fortune and in social position, be entitled to equality with those whom she might meet here. And that is true, if only as the child whom I adopt and enrich. I have not said more. And only since Lionel has appeared has she ever seemed interested in anything that relates to her parentage. From the recollection of her father she naturally shrinks—she never

mentions his name. But two days ago she did ask timidly, and with great change of countenance, if it was through her mother that she was entitled to a rank higher than she had hitherto known; and when I answered 'yes,' she sighed, and said, 'But my dear grandfather never spoke to me of her; he never even saw my mother.'"

GEORGE.—"And you, I suspect, do not much like to talk of that mother. I have gathered from you unawares to yourself, that she was not a person you could highly praise; and to me, as a boy, she seemed, with all her timidity, wayward and deceitful."

LADY MONTFORT.—"Alas! how bitterly she must have suffered—and how young she was. But you are right; I cannot speak to Sophy of her mother, the subject is connected with so much sorrow. But I told her 'that she should know all soon,' and she said, with a sweet and melancholy patience, 'When my poor grandfather will be by to hear; I can wait.'"

GEORGE.—"But is Lionel, with his quick intellect and busy imagination, equally patient? Does he not guess at the truth? You have told him that you do meditate a project which affects Guy Darrell, and required his promise not to divulge to Darrell his visits in this house."

LADY MONTFORT.—"He knows that Sophy's paternal grandfather was William Losely. From your uncle he heard William Losely's story, and—"

GEORGE.—"My uncle Alban?"

LADY MONTFORT.—"Yes; the Colonel was well acquainted with the elder Losely in former days, and spoke of him to Lionel with great affection. It seems that Lionel's father knew him also, and thoughtlessly involved him in his own pecuniary difficulties. Lionel was not long a visitor here before he asked me abruptly if Mr. Waife's real name was not Losely. I was obliged to own it, begging him not at present to question me further. He said, then, with much emotion, that he had an hereditary debt to discharge to William Losely, and that he was the last person who ought to relinquish belief in the old man's innocence of the crime for which the law had condemned him, or to judge him harshly if the innocence were not substantiated. You remember with what eagerness he joined in your search, until you positively forbade his interposition, fearing that should our poor friend hear of inquiries instituted by one whom he could not recognize as a friend, and might possibly consider an emissary of his son's, he would take yet greater pains to conceal himself. But from the moment that Lionel learned that Sophy's grandfather was William Losely, his manner to Sophy became yet more tenderly respectful. He has a glorious nature, that young man! But did your uncle never speak to you of William Losely?"

"No I am not surprised at that. My uncle Alban avoids 'painful subjects.' I am only surprised that he should have revived a painful subject in talk to Lionel. But I now understand why, when Waife first heard my name, he seemed affected, and why he so specially enjoined me never to mention or describe him to my friends and relations. Then Lionel knows Losely's story, but not his son's connection with Darrell?"

"Certainly not. He knows but what is generally said in the world, that Darrell's daughter eloped with a Mr. Hammond, a man of inferior birth, and died abroad, leaving but one child, who is also dead. Still Lionel does suspect,—my very injunctions of secresy must make him more than suspect, that the Loselys are somehow or other, mixed up with Darrell's family history. Hush! I hear his voice yonder—they approach."

"My dear cousin, let it be settled between us, then, that you frankly and without delay communicate to Lionel the whole truth, so far as it is known to us, and put it to him how best and most touchingly to move Mr. Darrell towards her, of whom we hold him to be the natural protector. I will write to my uncle to return to England that he may assist us in the same good work. Meanwhile, I shall have only good tidings to communicate to Sophy in my new hopes to discover her grandfather through Merle."

Here as the sun was setting Lionel and Sophy came in sight;—above their heads, the western clouds bathed in gold and purple. Sophy, perceiving George, bounded forwards, and reached his side, breathless.

CHAPTER V

Lionel Haughton having lost his heart, it is no longer a question what HE will do with it. But what will be done with it is a very grave question indeed.

LIONEL forestalled Lady Montfort in the delicate and embarrassing subject which her cousin had urged her to open. For while George, leading away Sophy, informed her of his journey to Norwich, and his interview with Merle, Lionel drew Lady Montfort into the house, and with much agitation, and in abrupt hurried accents, implored her to withdraw the promise which forbade him to inform his benefactor how and where his time had been spent of late. He burst forth with a declaration of that love with which Sophy had inspired him, and which Lady Montfort could not be but prepared to hear. "Nothing," said he, "but a respect for her more than filial anxiety at this moment could have kept my heart thus long silent. But that heart is so deeply pledged —so utterly hers—that it has grown an ingratitude, a disrespect to my generous kinsman, to conceal from him any longer the feelings which must color my whole future existence. Nor can I say to her, 'Can you return my affection?—will you listen to my vows?—will you accept them at the altar?'—until I have won, as I am sure to win, the approving consent of my more than father."

"You feel sure to win that consent, in spite of the stain on her gandfather's name?"

"When Darrell learns that, but for my poor father's fault, that name might be spotless now —yes! I am not Mr. Darrell's son—the transmitter of his line. I believe yet that he will form new ties. By my mother's side I have no ancestors to boast of; and you have owned to me that Sophy's mother was of gentle birth. Alban Morley told me, when I last saw him, that Darrell wishes me to marry, and leaves me free to choose my bride. Yes; I have no doubt of Mr. Darrell's consent. My dear mother will welcome to her heart the prize so coveted by mine; and Charles Haughton's son will have a place at his hearth for the old age of William Losely. Withdraw your interdict at once, dearest Lady Montfort, and confide to me all that you have hitherto left unexplained, but have promised to reveal when the time came. The time has come."

"It has come," said Lady Montfort, solemnly; "and Heaven grant that it may bear the blessed results which were in my thoughts when I took Sophy as my own adopted daughter, and hailed in yourself the reconciler of conflicting circumstance. Not under this roof should you woo William Losely's grandchild. Doubly are you bound to ask Guy Darrell's consent and blessing. At his hearth woo your Sophy—at his hands ask a bride in his daughter's child."

And to her wondering listener, Caroline Montfort told her grounds for the belief that connected the last of the Darrells with the convict's grandchild.

CHAPTER VI.

Credulous crystal-seers, young lovers, and grave wise men—all in the same category.

GEORGE MORLEY set out the next day for Norwich, in which antique city, ever since the Dane peopled it, some wizard or witch, star-reader, or crystal-seer has enjoyed a mysterious renown, perpetuating thus through all change in our land's social progress the long line of Vala and Saga, who came with the Raven and Valkyr from Scandinavian pine shores. Merle's reserve vanished on the perusal of Sophy's letter to him. He informed George that Waife declared he had plenty of money, and had even forced a loan upon Merle; but that he liked an active, wandering life; it kept him from thinking, and that a pedlar's pack would give him a license for vagrancy, and a budget to defray its expenses; that Merle had been consulted by him in the choice of light popular wares, and as to the route he might find the most free from competing rivals. Merle willingly agreed to accompany George in quest of the wanderer, whom, by the help of his crystal, he seemed calmly sure he could track and discover.

Accordingly, they both set out in the somewhat devious and desultory road which Merle, who had some old acquaintances amongst the ancient profession of hawkers had advised Waife to take. But Merle, unhappily confiding more in his crystal than Waife's steady adherence to the chart prescribed, led the Oxford scholar the life of a will-of-the-

wisp; zigzag, and shooting to and fro, here and there, till, just when George had lost all patience, Merle chanced to see, not in the crystal, a *pelerine* on the neck of a farmer's daughter, which he was morally certain he had himself selected for Waife's pannier. And the girl, stating in reply to his inquiry that her father had bought that *pelerine* as a present for her, not many days before, of a pedlar in a neighboring town, to the market of which the farmer resorted weekly. Merle cast an horary scheme, and finding the Third House (of short journeys) in favorable aspect to the Seventh House (containing the object desired), and in conjunction with the Eleventh House (friends), he gravely informed the scholar that their toils were at an end, and that the Hour and the Man were at hand. Not over sanguine, George consigned himself and the seer to an early train, and reached the famous town of Ouzelford, whither, when the chronological order of our narrative (which we have so far somewhat forestalled) will permit, we shall conduct the inquisitive reader.

Meanwhile Lionel, subscribing without a murmur to Lady Montfort's injunction to see Sophy no more till Darrell had been conferred with and his consent won, returned to his lodgings in London, sanguine of success, and flushed with joy. His intention was to set out at once to Fawley; but on reaching town, he found there a few lines from Darrell himself, in reply to a long and affectionate letter which Lionel had written a few days before, asking permission to visit the old manor-house; for amidst all his absorbing love for Sophy, the image of his lonely benefactor in that gloomy hermitage often rose before him. In these lines, Darrell, not unkindly, but very peremptorily declined Lionel's overtures.

"In truth, my dear young kinsman," wrote the recluse—"in truth I am, with slowness, and with frequent relapses laboring through convalescence from a moral fever. My nerves are yet unstrung. I am as one to whom is prescribed the most complete repose;—the visits, even of friends the dearest, forbidden as a perilous excitement. The sight of you—of any one from the great world—but especially of one whose rich vitality of youth and hope affronts and mocks my own fatigued exhaustion, would but irritate, unsettle, torture me. When I am quite well I will ask you to come. I shall enjoy your visit. Till then, on no account, and on no pretext, let my morbid ear catch the sound of your footfall on my quiet floor. Write to me often, but tell me nothing of the news and gossip of the world. Tell me only of yourself, your studies, your thoughts, your sentiments, your wishes. Nor forget my injunctions. Marry young, marry for love; let no ambition of power, no greed of gold, ever mislead you into giving to your life a companion who is not the half of your soul. Choose with the heart of a man; I know that you will choose with the self-esteem of a gentleman; and be assured beforehand of the sympathy and sanction of your

"CHURLISH BUT LOVING KINSMAN."

After this letter, Lionel felt that, at all events, he could not at once proceed to the old manor-house in defiance of its owner's prohibition. He wrote briefly, entreating Darrell to forgive him if he persisted in the prayer to be received at Fawley, stating that his desire for a personal interview was now suddenly become special and urgent; that it not only concerned himself, but affected his benefactor. By return of post Darrell replied with curt frigidity, repeating, with even sternness, his refusal to receive Lionel, but professing himself ready to attend to all that his kinsman might address to him by letter. "If it be as you state," wrote Darrell, with his habitual irony, "a matter that relates to myself, I claim, as a lawyer for my own affairs—the precaution I once enjoined to my clients—a written brief should always precede a personal consultation."

In fact, the proud man suspected that Lionel had been directly or indirectly addressed on behalf of Jasper Losely; and certainly that was the last subject on which he would have granted an interview to his young kinsman. Lionel, however, was not perhaps sorry to be thus compelled to trust to writing his own and Sophy's cause. Darrell was one of those men whose presence inspires a certain awe—one of those men whom we feel, upon great occasions, less embarrassed to address by letter than in person. Lionel's pen moved rapidly — his whole heart and soul suffused with feeling; and, rushing over the page, he reminded Darrell of the day when he had told to the rich man the tale of the lovely wandering child, and how, out of his sympathy for that child, Darrell's approving, fostering tenderness to himself had grown. Thus indirectly to her forlorn condition had he owed the rise in his own fortunes. He went through the story of William Losely as he had gathered it from Alban Morley, and touched pathetically on his own father's share in that dark history.

If William Losely really was hurried into crime by the tempting necessity for a compara-

tively trifling sum, but for Charles Haughton, would the necessity have arisen? Eloquently then the lover united grandfather and grandchild in one touching picture—their love for each other, their dependence on each other. He enlarged on Sophy's charming, unselfish, simple, noble character; he told how he had again found her; he dwelt on the refining accomplishments she owed to Lady Montfort's care. How came she with Lady Montfort? Why had Lady Montfort cherished, adopted her? Because Lady Montfort told him how much her own childhood had owed to Darrell; because, should Sophy be, as alleged, the offspring of his daughter, the heiress of his line, Caroline Montfort rejoiced to guard her from danger, save her from poverty, and ultimately thus to fit her to be not only acknowledged with delight, but with pride. Why had he been enjoined not to divulge to Darrell that he had again found, and under Lady Montfort's roof, the child whom, while yet unconscious of her claims, Darrell himself had vainly sought to find, and benevolently designed to succor?

Because Lady Montfort wished to fulfil her task—complete Sophy's education, interrupted by grief for her missing grandfather, and obtain indeed, when William Losely again returned, some proofs (if such existed) to corroborate the assertion of Sophy's parentage. "And," added Lionel, "Lady Montfort seems to fear that she has given you some cause of displeasure—what I know not, but which might have induced you to disapprove of the acquaintance I had begun with her. Be that as it may, would you could hear the reverence with which she ever alludes to your worth—the gratitude with which she attests her mother's and her own early obligations to your intellect and heart!" Finally, Lionel wove all his threads of recital into the confession of the deep love into which his romantic memories of Sophy's wandering childhood had been ripened by the sight of her graceful, cultured youth.

"Grant," he said, "that her father's tale be false—and no doubt you have sufficient reasons to discredit it—still, if you cannot love her as your daughter's child, receive, know her, I implore—let her love and revere you—as my wife! Leave me to protect her from a lawless father—leave me to redeem, by some deeds of loyalty and honor, any stain that her grandsire's sentence may seem to fix upon our union. Oh! if ambitious before, how ambitious I should be now—to efface for her sake as for mine, her grandsire's shame, my father's errors! But if, on the other hand, she should, on the requisite inquiries, he proved to descend from your ancestry—your father's blood in her pure veins—I know, alas! then that I should have no right to aspire to such nuptials. Who would even think of her descent from a William Losely? Who would not be too proud to remember only her descent from you? All spots would vanish in the splendor of your renown; the highest in the land would court her alliance. And I am but the pensioner of your bounty, and only on my father's side of gentle origin. But still I think you would not reject me—you would place the future to my credit; and I would wait, wait patiently, till I had won such a soldier's name as would entitle me to mate with a daughter of the Darrells."

Sheet upon sheet the young eloquence flowed on—seeking, with an art of which the writer was unconscious, all the arguments and points of view which might be the most captivating to the superb pride or to the exquisite tenderness which seemed to Lionel the ruling elements of Darrell's character.

He had not to wait long for a reply. At the first glance of the address on its cover, his mind misgave him; the hopes that had hitherto elated his spirit yielded to abrupt forebodings. Darrell's handwriting was habitually in harmony with the intonations of his voice—singularly clear, formed with a peculiar and original elegance, yet with the undulating ease of a natural, candid, impulsive character. And that decorous care in such mere trifles as the very sealing of a letter, which, neglected by musing poets and abstracted authors, is observable in men of high public station, was in Guy Darrell significant of the Patrician dignity that imparted a certain stateliness to his most ordinary actions.

But in the letter which lay in Lionel's hand the writer was scarcely recognizable—the direction blurred, the characters dashed off from a pen fierce yet tremulous; the seal a great blotch of wax; the device of the heron, with its soaring motto, indistinct and mangled, as if the stamping instrument had been plucked wrathfully away before the wax had cooled.

And when Lionel opened the letter, the handwriting within was yet more indicative of mental disorder. The very ink looked menacing and angry—blacker as the pen had been forcibly driven into the page.

"Unhappy boy!" began the ominous epistle, "is it through you that the false and detested woman who has withered up the noon-day of my life, seeks to dishonor its blighted close? Talk not to me of Lady Montfort's gratitude and reverence! Talk not to me of her amiable, tender, holy aim, to obtrude upon my childless house the granddaughter of a convicted felon! Show her these lines, and ask her by what knowledge of my nature she can assume that ignominy to my name would be a blessing to my hearth? Ask her, indeed, how she can dare to force herself still upon my thoughts—dare to imagine she can lay me under obligations—dare to think she can be a something still in my forlorn existence! Lionel Haughton, I command you in the name of all the dead whom we can claim as ancestors in common, to tear from your heart as you would tear a thought of disgrace, this image which has bewitched your reason. My daughter, thank Heaven, left no pledge of an execrable union. But a girl who has been brought up by a thief—a girl whom a wretch so lost to honor as Jasper Losely sought to make an instrument of fraud to my harassment and disgrace, be her virtues and beauty what they may, I could not, without intolerable anguish, contemplate as the wife of Lionel Haughton. But *receive* her as your wife! Admit her within these walls! Never, never; I scorn to threaten you with loss of favor, loss of fortune. Marry her if you will. You shall have an ample income secured to you. But from that moment our lives are separated—our relation ceases. You will never again see nor address me. But oh, Lionel, can you—can you inflict upon me this crowning sorrow? Can you, for the sake of a girl of whom you have seen but little, or in the Quixotism of atonement for your father's fault, complete the ingratitude I have experienced from those who owed me most? I cannot think it. I rejoice that you wrote—did not urge this suit in person. I should not have been able to control my passion; we might have parted foes. As it is, I restrain myself with difficulty! That woman, that child, associated thus to tear from me the last affection left to my ruined heart. No! You will not be so cruel! Send this, I command you, to Lady Montfort. See again neither her nor the impostor she has been cherishing for my disgrace. This letter will be your excuse to break off with both—with both.

"GUY DARRELL."

Lionel was stunned. Not for several hours could he recover self-possession enough to analyze his own emotions, or discern the sole course that lay before him. After such a letter, from such a benefactor, no option was left to him. Sophy must be resigned; but the sacrifice crushed him to the earth—crushed the very manhood out of him. He threw himself on the floor, sobbing,—sobbing, as if body and soul were torn, each from each, in convulsive spasms.

But send this letter to Lady Montfort? A letter so wholly at variance with Darrell's dignity of character—a letter in which rage seemed lashed to unreasoning frenzy. Such bitter language of hate and scorn, and even insult to a woman, and to the very woman who had seemed to Lionel so reverently to cherish the writer's name—so tenderly to scheme for the writer's happiness! Could he obey a command that seemed to lower Darrell even more than it could humble her to whom it was sent?

Yet disobey! What but the letter itself could explain? Ah—and was there not some strange misunderstanding with respect to Lady Montfort, which the letter itself, and nothing but the letter, would enable her to dispel; and if dispelled, might not Darrell's whole mind undergo a change? A flash of joy suddenly broke on his agitated, tempestuous thoughts. He forced himself again to read those blotted impetuous lines. Evidently—evidently, while writing to Lionel—the subject Sophy—the man's wrathful heart had been addressing itself to neither. A suspicion seized him; with that suspicion hope. He would send the letter, and with but few words from himself—words that revealed his immense despair at the thought of relinquishing Sophy—intimated his belief that Darrell here was, from some error of judgment which Lionel could not comprehend, avenging himself on Lady Montfort; and closed with his prayer to her, if so, to forgive lines colored by hasty passion, and, for the sake of all, not to disdain that self-vindication which might perhaps yet soften a nature possessed of such depths of sweetness as that which appeared now so cruel and so bitter. He would not yet despond—not yet commission her to give his last farewell to Sophy.

CHAPTER VII.

The man-eater continues to take his quiet steak out of Dolly Poole, and is in turn subjected to the anatomical knife of the dissecting Author. Two traps are laid for him—one by his fellow Man-eaters—one by that deadly persecutrix, the Woman who tries to save him in spite of all he can do, to be hanged.

MEANWHILE the unhappy Adolphus Poole had been the reluctant but unfailing source

from which Jasper Losely had weekly drawn the supplies to his worthless and workless existence.—Never was a man more constrainedly benevolent, and less recompensed for pecuniary sacrifice by applauding conscience. than the doomed inhabitant of Alhambra Villa. In the utter failure of his attempts to discover Sophy, or to induce Jasper to accept Colonel Morley's proposals, he saw this parasital monster fixed upon his entrails, like the vulture on those of the classic sufferer in mythological tales. Jasper, indeed, had accommodated himself to this regular and unlaborious mode of gaining "*sa pauvre vie.*" To call once a-week upon his old acquaintance, frighten him with a few threats, or force a deathlike smile from agonizing lips by a few villanous jokes, carry off his four sovereigns, and enjoy himself thereon till pay-day duly returned, was a condition of things that Jasper did not greatly care to improve; and truly had he said to Poole that his earlier energy had left him.

As a sensualist of Jasper's stamp grows older and falls lower, indolence gradually usurps the place once occupied by vanity or ambition. Jasper was bitterly aware that his old comeliness was gone; that never more could he ensnare a maiden's heart or a widow's gold. And when this truth was fully brought home to him, it made a strange revolution in all his habits. He cared no longer for dress and gew-gaws—sought rather to hide himself than to parade. In the neglect of the person he had once so idolized—in the course roughness which now characterized his exterior—there was that sullen despair which the vain only know when what had made them dainty and jocund is gone for ever. The human mind, in deteriorating, fits itself to the sphere into which it declines. Jasper would not now, if he could, have driven a cabriolet down St. James's Street. He had taken more and more to the vice of drinking as the excitement of gambling was withdrawn from him. For how gamble with those who had nothing to lose, and to whom he himself would have been pigeon, not hawk? And as he found that, on what he thus drew regularly from Dolly Poole, he could command all the comforts that his embruted tastes now desired, so an odd kind of prudence for the first time in his life came with what he chose to consider "a settled income."

He mixed with ruffians in their nightly ogies; treated them to cheap potations; swaggered, bullied, boasted, but shared in no project of theirs which might bring into jeopardy the life which Dolly Poole rendered so comfortable and secure. His energies, once so restless, were lulled, partly by habitual intoxication, partly by the physical pains which had nestled themselves into his robust fibres, efforts of an immense and still tenacious vitality to throw off diseases repugnant to its native magnificence of health. The finest constitutions are those which, when once seriously impaired, occasion the direst pain; but they also enable the sufferer to bear pain that would soon wear away the delicate. And Jasper bore his pains stoutly, though at times they so exasperated his temper, that woe then to any of his comrades whose want of caution or respect gave him the occasion to seek relief in wrath! His hand was as heavy, his arm as stalwart as ever. George Morley had been rightly informed. Even by burglars and cutthroats, whose dangers he shunned, while fearlessly he joined their circle, Jasper Losely was regarded with terror. To be the awe of reckless men, as he had been the admiration of foolish women, this was delight to his vanity, the last delight that was left to it.

But he thus provoked a danger to which his arrogance was blind. His boon companions began to grow tired of him. He had been welcomed to their resort on the strength of the catchword or passport which confederates at Paris had communicated to him, and of the reputation for great daring and small scruple which he took from Cutts, who was of high caste amongst their mysterious tribes, and who every now and then flitted over to the Continent, safe and accursed as the Wandering Jew. But when they found that this Achilles of the Greeks would only talk big, and employ his wits on his private exchequer and his thews against themselves, they began not only to tire of his imperious manner, but to doubt his fidelity to the cause. And, all of a sudden, Cutts, who had at first extolled Jasper as one likely to be valuable acquisition to the Family of Night, altered his tone, and insinuated that the bravo was not to be trusted; that his reckless temper and incautious talk when drunk would unfit him for a safe accomplice in any skilful project of plunder; and that he was so

unscrupulous, and had so little sympathy with their class, that he might be quite capable of playing spy or turning king's evidence; that, in short, it would be well to rid themselves of his domineering presence.

Still there was that physical power in this lazy Hercules—still, if the Do-nought, he was so fiercely the Dread-nought—that they did not dare, despite the advantage of numbers, openly to brave and defy him. No one would bell the cat—and *such* a cat! They began to lay plots to get rid of him through the law. Nothing could be easier to such knowing adepts in guilt than to transfer to his charge any deed of violence one of their own gang had committed—heap damning circumstances round him—privily apprise justice—falsely swear away his life. In short, the man was in their way as a wasp that has blundered into an ant's nest; and, while frightened at the size of the intruder, these honest ants were resolved to get him out of their citadel alive or dead. Probable it was that Jasper Losely would meet with his deserts at last for an offence of which he was innocent as a babe unborn.

It is at this juncture that we are re-admitted to the presence of Arabella Crane.

She was standing by a window on the upper floor of a house situated in a narrow street. The blind was let down, but she had drawn it a little aside, and was looking out. By the fireside was seated a thin, vague, gnome-like figure, perched comfortless on the edge of a rush-bottomed chair, with its shadowy knees drawn up till they nearly touched its shadowy chin. There was something about the outline of this figure so indefinite and unsubstantial, that you might have taken it for an optical illusion, a spectral apparition on the point of vanishing. This thing was, however, possessed of voice, and was speaking in a low but distinct hissing whisper. As the whisper ended, Arabella Crane, without turning her face, spoke, also under the breath.

"You are sure that, so long as Losely draws this weekly stipend from the man whom he has in his power, he will persist in the same course of life. Can you not warn him of the danger?"

"Peach against pals! I dare not. No trusting him. He would come down, mad with brandy, make an infernal row, seize two or three by the throat, dash their heads against each other, blab, bully, and a knife would be out, and a weasand or two cut, and a carcase or so dropped into the Thames—mine certainly—his perhaps."

"You say you can keep back this plot against him for two or three days?"

"For two days—yes. I should be glad to save General Jas. He has the bones of a fine fellow, and if he had not destroyed himself by brandy, he might have been at the top of the tree—in the profession. But he is fit for nothing now."

"Ah! and you say the brandy is killing him?"

"No, he will not be killed by brandy, if he continues to drink it among the same jolly set."

"And if he were left without the money to spend amongst these terrible companions, he would no longer resort to their meetings? You are right there. The same vanity that makes him pleased to be the great man in that society would make him shrink from coming amongst them as a beggar."

"And if he had not the wherewithal to pay the weekly subscription, there would be an excuse to shut the door in his face. All these fellows wish to do is to get rid of him; and if by fair means, there would be no necessity to resort to foul. The only danger would be that from which you have so often saved him. In despair, would he not commit some violent rash action—a street robbery, or something of the kind? He has courage for any violence, but no longer the cool head to plan a scheme which would not be detected. You see I can prevent my pals joining in such risks as he may propose, or letting him (if he were to ask it) into any adventure of their own, for they know that I am a safe adviser; they respect me; the law has never been able to lay hold of *me;* and when I say to them, 'that fellow drinks, blabs, and boasts, and would bring us all into trouble,' they will have nothing to do with him; but I cannot prevent his doing what he pleases out of his own muddled head, and with his own reckless hand."

"But you will keep in his confidence, and let me know all that he proposes!"

"Yes."

"And meanwhile, he must come to me. And this time I have more hope than ever,

since his health gives way, and he is weary of crime itself. Mr. Cutts, come near—softly. Look—nay, nay, he cannot see you from below, and you are screened by the blind. Look, I say, where he sits."

She pointed to a room on the ground-floor in the opposite house, where might be dimly seen a dull red fire in a sordid grate, and a man's form, the head pillowed upon arms that rested on a small table. On the table a glass, a bottle.

"It is thus that his mornings pass," said Arabella Crane, with a wild bitter pity in the tone of her voice. "Look, I say, is he formidable now? *can* you fear him?"

"Very much indeed," muttered Cutts. "He is only stupefied, and he can shake off a doze as quickly as a bulldog does when a rat is let into his kennel."

"Mr. Cutts, you tell me that he constantly carries about him the same old pocket-book which he says contains his fortune; in other words, the papers that frighten his victim into giving him the money which is now the cause of his danger. There is surely no pocket you cannot pick or get picked, Mr. Cutts? Fifty pounds for that book in three hours."

"Fifty pounds are not enough; the man he sponges on would give more to have those papers in his power."

"Possibly; but Losely has not been dolt enough to trust you sufficiently to enable you to know how to commence negotiations. Even if the man's name and address be amongst those papers, you could not make use of the knowledge without bringing Jasper himself upon you; and even if Jasper were out of the way, you would not have the same hold over his victim; you know not the circumstances; you could make no story out of some incoherent rambling letters; and the man, who, I can tell you, is by nature a bully, and strong, compared with any other man but Jasper, would seize you by the collar; and you would be lucky if you got out of his house with no other loss than the letters, and no other gain but a broken bone. Pooh! you know all that, or you would have stolen the book and made use of it before. Fifty pounds for that book in three hours; and if Jasper Losely be safe and alive six months hence, fifty pounds more, Mr. Cutts. See! he stirs not—he must be fast asleep. Now is the moment."

"What, in his own room!" said Cutts with contempt. "Why, he would know who did it; and where should I be to-morrow? No—in the streets; any one has a right to pick a pocket in the Queen's highways. In three hours you shall have the book."

CHAPTER VIII.

Mercury is the Patron Deity of Mercantile Speculators, as well as of crack-brained Poets; indeed, he is much more favorable, more a friend at a pinch, to the former class of his protegés than he is to the latter.

"POOLUM per hostes Mercurius celer
Denso paventem sustulit aere."

POOLE was sitting with his wife after dinner. He had made a good speculation that day; Little Johnny would be all the better for it a few years hence, and some other man's little Johnnys all the worse—but each for himself in this world! Poole was therefore basking in the light of his gentle helpmate's approving smile. He had taken an extra glass of a venerable port-wine, which had passed to his cellar from the bins of Uncle Sam. Commercial prosperity without, conjugal felicity within, the walls of Alhambra Villa; surely Adolphus Poole is an enviable man! Does he look so? The ghost of what he was but a few months ago! His cheeks have fallen in; his clothes hang on him like bags; there is a worried, haggard look in his eyes, a nervous twitch in his lips, and every now and then he looks at the handsome Parisian clock on the chimney-piece, and then shifts his posture, snubs his connubial angel, who asks "what ails him?" refills his glass, and stares on the fire, seeing strange shapes in the mobile aspects of the coals.

To-morrow brings back this weekly spectre! To-morrow Jasper Losely, punctual to the stroke of eleven, returns to remind him of that past which, if revealed, will blast the future. And revealed it might be any hour despite the bribe for silence which he must pay with his own hands, under his own roof. Would he trust another with the secret of that payment?—horror! Would he visit Losely at his own lodging, and pay him there?—murder! Would he appoint him somewhere in the

streets—run the chance of being seen with such a friend? Respectability confabulating with offal?—disgrace! And Jasper had on the last two or three visits been peculiarly disagreeable. He had talked loud. Poole feared that his wife might have her ear at the key-hole. Jasper had seen the parlor-maid in the passage as he went out, and caught her round the waist. The parlor-maid had complained to Mrs. Poole, and said she should leave if so insulted by such an ugly blackguard. Alas! what the poor lady-killer has come to? Mrs. Poole had grown more and more inquisitive and troublesome on the subject of such extraordinary visits; and now, as her husband stirred the fire—having roused her secret ire by his previous unmanly snubbings, and Mrs. Poole being one of those incomparable wives who have a perfect command of temper, who never reply to angry words at the moment, and who always, with exquisite calm and self-possession, pay off every angry word by an amiable sting at a right moment—Mrs. Poole, I say, thus softly said—

"Sammy, duck, we know what makes oo so cross; but it shan't vex oo long, Sammy. That dreadful man comes to-morrow. He always comes the same day of the week."

"Hold your tongue, Mrs. Poole."

"Yes, Sammy, dear, I'll hold my tongue. But Sammy shan't be imposed upon by mendicants; for I know he is a mendicant—one of those sharpers or black-legs who took oo in, poor innocent Sam, in oo wild bachelor days, and oo good heart can't bear to see him in distress; but there must by an end to all things."

"Mrs. Poole—Mrs. Poole—will you stop your fool's jaw or not?"

"My poor dear hubby," said the angel, squeezing out a mild tear, "oo will be in good hands to advise oo; for I've been and told Pa!"

"You have," faltered Poole, "told your father—you have!" and the expression of his face became so ghastly that Mrs. Poole grew seriously terrified. She had long felt that there was something very suspicious in her husband's submission to the insolence of so rude a visitor. But she knew that he was not brave; the man might intimidate him by threats of personal violence. The man might probably be some poor relation, or some one whom Poole had ruined, either in bygone discreditable sporting days, or in recent respectable mercantile speculations. But at that ghastly look a glimpse of the real truth broke upon her; and she stood speechless and appalled. At this moment there was a loud ring at the street-door bell. Poole gathered himself up, and staggered out of the room into the passage.

His wife remained without motion; for the first time she conceived a fear of her husband. Presently she heard a harsh female voice in the hall, and then a joyous exclamation from Poole himself. Recovered by these unexpected sounds, she went mechanically forth into the passage, just in time to see the hems of a dark iron-grey dress disappearing within Poole's study, while Poole, who had opened the study door, and was bowing in the iron-grey dress obsequiously, turned his eyes towards his wife, and striding towards her for a moment, whispered—"Go up-stairs and stir not," in a tone so unlike his usual gruff accents of command, that it cowed her out of the profound contempt with which she habitually received, while smilingly obeying, his marital authority.

Poole, vanishing into his study, carefully closed his door, and would have caught his lady visitor by both her hands; but she waived him back, and, declining a seat, remained sternly erect.

"Mr. Poole, I have but a few words to say. The letters which gave Jasper Losely the power to extort money from you are no longer in his possession; they are in mine. You need fear him no more—you will fee him no more."

"Oh!" cried Poole, falling his knees, "the blessing of a father of a family—a babe not six weeks born—be on your blessed, blessed head!"

"Get up, and don't talk nonsense. I do not give you these papers at present, nor burn them. Instead of being in the power of a muddled, irresolute drunkard, you are in the power of a vigilant, clear-brained woman. You are in my power, and you will act as I tell you."

"You can ask nothing wrong, I am sure," said Poole, his grateful enthusiasm much abated. "Command me; but the papers can be of no use to you; I will pay for them handsomely."

"Be silent and listen. I retain these papers—first, because Jasper Losely must not know that they ever passed to my hands; secondly because you must inflict no injury on Losely himself. Betray me to him, or try to render himself up to the law, and the documents will be used against you ruthlessly. Obey, and you have nothing to fear, and nothing to pay. When Jasper Losely calls on you to-morrow, ask him to show you the letters. He cannot; he will make excuses. Decline peremptorily, but not insultingly (his temper is fierce), to pay him farther. He will perhaps charge you with having hired some one to purloin his pocket-book; let him think it. Stop—your window here opens on the ground;—a garden without:—Ah! have three of the police in that garden, in sight of the window. Point to them if he threaten you; summon them to your aid, or pass out to them, if he actually attempt violence. But when he has left the house, you must urge no charge against him; he must be let off unscathed. You can be at no loss for excuse in this mercy; a friend of former times—needy, unfortunate, whom habits of drink maddened for the moment—necessary to eject him—inhuman to prosecute—any story you please. The next day you can, if you choose, leave London for a short time: I advise it. But his teeth will be drawn; he will most probably never trouble you again. I know his character. There, I have done; open the door, sir."

CHAPTER IX.

The wreck and the life-boat in a fog.

THE next day, a little after noon, Jasper Losely, coming back from Alhambra Villa—furious, desperate, knowing not where to turn for bread, or on whom to pour his rage—beheld suddenly, in a quiet, half-built street, which led from the suburb to the New Road, Arabella Crane standing right in his path. She had emerged from one of the many straight intersecting roads which characterize that crude nebula of a future city; and the woman and the man met thus face to face; not another passer-by visible in the thoroughfare;—at a distance the dozing hack cab-stand; round and about them carcasses of brick and mortar—some with gaunt scaffolding fixed into their ribs, and all looking yet more weird in their raw struggle into shape through the livid haze of a yellow fog.

Losely, seeing Arabella thus planted in his way, recoiled; and the superstition in which he had long associated her image with baffled schemes and perilous hours, sent the wrathful blood back through his veins so quickly that he heard his heart beat!

MRS. CRANE.—"So! You see we cannot help meeting, Jasper dear, do what you will to shun me."

LOSELY.—"I—I—you always startle me so?—you are in town, then?—to stay?—your old quarters?"

MRS. CRANE.—"Why ask? You cannot wish to know where I am—you would not call. But how fares it?—what do you do?—how do you live? You look ill—Poor Jasper."

LOSELY (fiercely).—"Hang your pity, and give me some money."

MRS. CRANE (calmly laying her lean hand on the arm which was darted forward more in menace than entreaty, and actually terrifying the Gladiator as she linked that deadly arm into her own).—"I said you would always find me when at the worst of your troubles. And so, Jasper, it shall be till this right hand of yours is powerless as the clay at our feet. Walk—walk; you are not afraid of me?—walk on, tell me all. Where have you just been?"

Jasper, therewith reminded of his wrongs, poured out a volley of abuse on Poole, communicating to Mrs. Crane the whole story of his claims on that gentleman—the loss of the pocket-book filched from him, and Poole's knowledge that he was thus disarmed.

"And the coward," said he, grinding his teeth, "got out of his window—and three policemen in his garden. He must have bribed a pickpocket—low knave that he is. But I shall find out—and then—"

"And then, Jasper, how will you be better off?—the letters are gone; and Poole has you in his power if you threaten him again. Now, hark you; you did not murder the Italian who was found stabbed in the fields yonder a week ago; £100 reward for the murderer?"

"I—no. How coldly you ask! I have hit hard in fair fight;—murdered—never. If ever I take to that, I shall begin with Poole."

"But I tell you, Jasper, that you are suspected of that murder; that you will be accused of that murder; and if I had not thus fortunately met you, for that murder you would be tried and hanged."

"Are you serious? Who could accuse me?"

"Those who know that you are not guilty—those who could make you appear so—the villians with whom you horde, and drink, and brawl! Have I ever been wrong in my warnings yet?"

"This is too horrible," faltered Losely, thinking not of the conspiracy against his life, but of her prescience in detecting it. "It must be witchcraft and nothing else. How could you learn what you tell me?"

"That is my affair; enough for you that I am right. Go no more to those black haunts; they are even now full of snares and pitfalls for you. Leave London, and you are safe. Trust to me."

"And where shall I go?"

"Look you, Jasper; you have worn out this old world—no refuge for you but the new. Whither went your father, thither go you. Consent, and you shall not want. You cannot discover Sophy. You have failed in all attempts on Darrell's purse. But agree to sail to Australasia, and I will engage to you an income larger than you say you extorted from Poole, to be spent in those safer shores."

"And you will go with me, I suppose," said Losely, with ungracious sullenness.

"Go with you, as you please. Be where you are—yes."

The ruffian bounded with rage and loathing.

"Woman, cross me no more, or I shall be goaded into—"

"Into killing me—you dare not! Meet my eye if you can—you dare not! Harm me, yea a hair of my head, and your moments are numbered!—your doom sealed. Be we two together in a desert—not a human eye to see the deed—not a human ear to receive my groan, and still I should stand by your side unharmed. I, who have returned the wrongs received from you, by vigilant, untiring benefits—I, who have saved you from so many enemies, and so many dangers—I, who, now when all the rest of earth shun you—when all other resource fails—I, who now say to you, 'Share my income, but be honest!'—*I* receive injury from that hand! No; the guilt would be too unnatural—Heaven would not permit it. Try, and your arm will fall palsied by your side!"

Jasper's bloodshot eyes dropped beneath the woman's fixed and scorching gaze, and his lips, white and tremulous, refused to breathe the fierce curse into which his brutal nature concentrated its fears and its hate. He walked on in gloomy silence; but some words she had let fall suggested a last resort to his own daring.

She had urged him to quit the old world for the new, but that had been the very proposition conveyed to him from Darrell. If that proposition, so repugnant to the indolence that had grown over him, must be embraced, better at least sail forth alone, his own master, than be the dependent slave of this abhorred and persecuting benefactress. His despair gave him the determination he had hitherto lacked. He would seek Darrell himself, and make the best compromise he could. This resolve passed into his mind as he stalked on through the yellow fog, and his nerves recovered from their irritation, and his thoughts regained something of their ancient craft as the idea of escaping from Mrs. Crane's vigilance and charity assumed a definite shape.

"Well," said he at length, dissimulating his repugnance, and with an effort at his old half-coaxing, half-rollicking tones, "you certainly are the best of creatures; and, as you say,

> "Had I a heart for falsehood framed,
> I ne'er could injure you,"

ungrateful dog though I must seem, and very likely am. I own I have a horror of Australasia—such a long sea-voyage! New scenes no longer attract me; I am no longer young, though I ought to be; but if you insist on it, and will really condescend to accompany me in spite of all my sins to you, why, I can make up my mind. And as to honesty, ask those infernal rascals, who, you say, would swear away my life, and they will tell you that I have been as innocent as a Lamb since my return to England; and that is my guilt in their villanious eyes. As long as that infamous Poole gave me enough for my humble wants, I was a reformed man. I wish to keep reformed. Very little suffices for me now. As you say, Australasia may be the best place for me. When shall we go?"

"Are you serious?"

"To be sure."

"Then I will inquire the days on which the vessels sail. You can call on me at my own old home, and all shall be arranged. Oh, Jasper Josely, do not avoid this last chance of escape from the perils that gather round you."

"No; I am sick of life—of all things except repose, Arabella I suffer horrible pain."

He groaned, for he spoke truly. At that moment the gnaw of the monster anguish, which fastens on the nerves like a wolf's tooth, was so keen that he longed to swell his groan into a roar. The old fable of Hercules in the poisoned tunic was surely invented by some skilled physiologist to denote the truth that it is only in the strongest frames that pain can be pushed into its extremest torture. The heart of the grim woman was instantly and thoroughly softened. She paused; she made him lean on her arm; she wiped the drops from his brow; she addressed him in the most soothing tones of pity. The spasm passed away suddenly as it does in neuralgic agonies, and with it any gratitude or any remorse in the breast of the sufferer.

"Yes," he said, "I will call on you; but meanwhile I am without a farthing. Oh, do not fear that if you helped me now, I should again shun you. I have no other resource left; nor have I now the spirit I once had. I no longer now laugh at fatigue and danger."

"But will you swear by all that you yet hold sacred—if, alas! there be aught which is sacred to you—that you will not again seek the company of those men who are conspiring to entrap you into the hangman's hands?"

"Seek them again, the ungrateful cowardly blackguards! No, no; I promise you that—solemnly; it is medical aid that I want; it is rest, I tell you—rest, rest, rest."

Arabella Crane drew forth her purse. "Take what you will," said she gently. Jasper, whether from the desire to deceive her, or because her alms were really so distasteful to his strange kind of pride that he stinted to bare necessity the appeal to them, contented himself with a third or fourth of the sovereigns that the purse contained, and after a few words of thanks and promises, he left her side, and soon vanished in the fog that grew darker and darker at the night-like wintry day deepened over the silenced thoroughfares.

The woman went her way through the mists, hopeful—through the mists went the man, hopeful also. Recruiting himself by slight food and strong drink at a tavern on his road, he stalked on to Darrell's house in Carlton Gardens; and, learning there that Darrell was at Fawley, hastened to the station from which started the train to the town nearest to the old manor-house; reached that town safely, and there rested for the night.

BOOK NINTH.

CHAPTER I.

The secret which Guy Darrell did not confide to Alban Morley.

It was a serene noonday in that melancholy interlude of the seasons when autumn has really ceased—winter not yet visibly begun. The same hired vehicle which had borne Lionel to Fawley, more than five years ago, stopped at the gate of the wild umbrageous grass-land that surrounded the antique Manor-house. It had been engaged, from the nearest railway-station on the London road, by a lady, with a female companion who seemed her servant. The driver dismounted, opened the door of the vehicle, and the lady, bidding him wait there till her return, and saying a few words to her companion, descended, and, drawing her cloak round her, walked on alone towards the Manor-house. At first her step was firm, and her pace quick. She was still under the excitement of the resolve in which the journey from her home had been suddenly conceived and promptly accomplished. But as the path wound on through the stillness of venerable groves, her courage began to fail her. Her feet loitered, her eyes wandered round vaguely, timidly. The scene was not new to her.

As she gazed, rushingly gathered over her sorrowful shrinking mind memories of sportive happy summer days, spent in childhood amidst those turfs and shades—memories, more agitating, of the last visit (childhood then ripened into blooming youth) to the ancient dwelling which, yet concealed from view by the swells of the undulating ground and the yellow boughs of the giant trees, betrayed its site by the smoke rising thin and dim against the limpid atmosphere. She bent down her head, closing her eyes as if to shut out less the face of the landscape than the images that rose ghost-like up to people it, and sighed heavily, heavily. Now—hard by, roused from its bed amongst the fern, the doe that Darrell had tamed into companionship had watched with curiosity this strange intruder on its solitary range. But at the sound of that heavy sigh, the creature, emboldened, left its halting-place, and stole close to the saddened woman, touching her very dress. Doubtless, as Darrell's companion in his most musing hours, the doe was familiarized to the sound of sighs, and associated the sound with its gentlest notions of humanity.

The lady, starting, raised her drooping lids, and met those soft dark eyes, dark and soft as her own. Round the animal's neck there was a simple collar, with a silver plate, fresh and new, evidently placed there recently; and as the creature thrust forward its head, as if for the caress of a wonted hand, the lady read the inscription. The words were in Italian, and may be construed thus: "Female, yet not faithless; fostered, yet not ungrateful." As she read, her heart so swelled, and her resolve so deserted her, that she turned as if she had received a sentence of dismissal, and went back some hasty paces. The doe followed her till she paused again, and then it went slowly down a narrow path to the left, which led to the banks of the little lake.

The lady had now recovered herself. "It is a duty, and it must be done," she muttered, and letting down the veil she had raised on entering the demesne, she hurried on, not retracing her steps in the same path, but taking that into which the doe had stricken, perhaps in the confused mistake of a mind absorbed and absent—perhaps in revived recollection of the localities, for the way thus to the house was shorter than by the weed-grown carriage-road. The lake came in view, serene and glassy; half-leafless woodlands reflected far upon its quiet waters; the doe halted, lifted

its head, and sniffed the air, and somewhat quickening its pace, vanished behind one of the hillocks clothed with brushwood, that gave so primitive and forest-like a character to the old ground. Advancing still, there now, at her right hand, grew out of the landscape the noble turrets of the unfinished pile; and, close at her left, under a gnarled fantastic thorn-tree, the still lake at his feet reflecting his stiller shadow, reclined Guy Darrell, the doe nestled at his side.

So unexpected this sight—he, whom she came to seek yet feared to see, so close upon her way—the lady uttered a faint but sharp cry, and Darrell sprang to his feet. She stood before him, veiled, mantled, bending as a suppliant.

"Avaunt!" he faltered wildly. "Is this a spirit my own black solitude conjures up—or is it a delusion, a dream?"

"It is I—I!—the Caroline dear to you once, if detested now! Forgive me! Not for myself I come." She flung back her veil—her eyes pleadingly sought his.

"So," said Darrell, gathering his arms round his breast in the gesture peculiar to him when seeking either to calm a more turbulent movement, or to confirm a sterner resolution of his heart—"so! Caroline, Marchioness of Montfort, we are then fated to meet face to face at last! I understand—Lionel Haughton, sent, or showed to you, my letter?"

"Oh! Mr. Darrell, how could you have the heart to write in such terms of one who—"

"One who had taken the heart from my bosom and trampled it into the mire. True, fribbles will say, 'Fie! the vocabulary of fine gentlemen has no harsh terms for women.' Gallants, to whom love is pastime, leave or are left with elegant sorrow and courtly bows. Madam, I was never such airy gallant. I am but a man unhappily in earnest—a man who placed in those hands his life of life—who said to you, while yet in his prime, 'There is my future—take it, till it vanish out of earth!' You have made that life substanceless as a ghost—that future barren as the grave. And when you dare force yourself again upon my way, and would dictate laws to my very hearth—if I speak as a man what plain men must feel—'Oh! Mr. Darrell,' says your injured ladyship, 'how can you have the heart?' Woman! were you not false as the falsest? Falsehood has no dignity to awe rebuke—falsehood no privilege of sex."

"Darrell — Darrell — Darrell — spare me, spare me! I have been so punished—I am so miserable!"

"You!—punished!—What! you sold yourself to youth, and sleek looks, and grand titles, and the flattery of a world; and your rose-leaves were crumpled in the gorgeous marriage-bed. Adequate punishment!—A crumpled rose-leaf! True, the man was a ——. But why should I speak ill of him? It was he who was punished, if, accepting his rank, you recognized in himself a nothingness that you could neither love nor honor. False and ungrateful alike to the man you chose—to the man you forsook! And now you have buried one, and you have schemed to degrade the other."

"Degrade!—Oh! it is that charge which has stung me to the quick. All the others I deserve. But *that* charge! Listen—you shall listen."

"I stand here resigned to do so. Say all you will now, for it is the last time on earth I lend my ears to your voice."

"Be it so—the last time." She paused to recover speech, collect thoughts, gain strength; and strange though it may seem to those who have never loved, amidst all her grief and humiliation there was a fearful delight in that presence from which she had been exiled since her youth—nay, delight unaccountable to herself, even in that rough, vehement, bitter tempest of reproach; for an instinct told her that there would have been no hatred in the language had no love been lingering in the soul.

"Speak," said Darrell gently, softened, despite himself, by her evident struggle to control emotion.

Twice she began—twice voice failed her. At last her words came forth audibly. She began with her plea for Lionel and Sophy, and gathered boldness by her zeal on their behalf. She proceeded to vindicate her own motives—to acquit herself of his harsh charge. She scheme for his degradation! She had been too carried away by her desire to promote his happiness—to guard him from the possibility of a self-reproach. At first he listened to her with a haughty calmness, merely saying, in reference to Sophy and Lionel, "I have nothing to add or to alter in the resolution I have com-

municated to Lionel." But when she thus insensibly mingled their cause with her own, his impatience broke out. "My happiness! Oh! well have you proved the sincerity with which you schemed for *that!* Save me from self-reproach—me! Has Lady Montfort so wholly forgotten that she was once Caroline Lyndsay that she can assume the part of a warning angel against the terrors of self-reproach?"

"Ah!" she murmured faintly, "can you suppose, however fickle and thankless I may seem to you—"

"Seem!" he repeated.

"Seem!" she said again, but meekly—"seem, and seem justly;—yet can you suppose that when I became free to utter my remorse—to speak of gratitude, of reverence—I was insincere? Darrell, Darrell, you cannot think so! That letter which reached you abroad nearly a year ago, in which I laid my pride of woman at your feet, as I lay it now in coming here—that letter, in which I asked if it were impossible for you to pardon, too late for me to atone—was written on my knees. It was the outburst of my very heart. Nay, nay, hear me out. Do not imagine that I would again obtrude a hope so contemptuously crushed!" (A deep blush came over her cheek). "I blame you not, nor, let me say it, did your severity bring that shame which I might have justly felt had I so written to any man on earth but you—you, so reverenced from my infancy, that—"

"Ay," interrupted Darrell fiercely, "ay, do not fear that I should misconceive you; you would not so have addressed the young, the fair, the happy. No! you, proud beauty, with hosts, no doubt, of supplicating wooers, would have thrust that hand into the flames before it wrote to a young man, loved as the young are loved, what without shame it wrote to the old man, reverenced as the old are *reverenced!* But my heart is not old, and your boasted reverence was a mocking insult. Your letter, torn to pieces, was returned to you without a word—insult for insult! You felt no shame that I should so rudely reject your pity. Why should you? Rejected pity is not rejected love. The man was not less old because he was not reconciled to age."

This construction of her tender penitence—this explanation of his bitter scorn—took Caroline Montfort wholly by surprise. From what writhing agonies of lacerated self-love came that pride which was but self-depreciation? It was a glimpse into the deeper rents of his charred and desolated being which increased at once her yearning affection and her passionate despair. Vainly she tried to utter the feelings that crowded upon her!—vainly, vainly! Woman can murmur, "I have injured you—forgive!" when she cannot exclaim, "You disdain me, but I love!" Vainly, vainly her bosom heaved and her lips moved under the awe of his flashing eyes and the grandeur of his indignant frown.

"Ah!" he resumed, pursuing his own thoughts with a sombre intensity of passion that rendered him almost unconscious of her presence—"Ah! I said to myself, 'Oh, she believes that she has been so mourned and missed that my soul would spring back to her false smile; that I could be so base a slave to my senses as to pardon the traitress because her face was fair enough to haunt my dreams. She dupes herself; she is no necessity to my existence—I have wrenched it from her power years, long years ago! I will show her since again she deigns to remember me, that I am not so old as to be grateful for the leavings of a heart. I will love another—I will be beloved. She shall not say with secret triumph, 'The old man dotes in rejecting me.'"

"Darrell, Darrell—unjust—cruel; kill me rather than talk thus!"

He heeded not her cry. His words rolled on in that wonderful, varying music which, whether in tenderness or in wrath, gave to his voice a magical power—fascinating, hushing, overmastering human souls.

"But—you have the triumph; see, I am still alone! I sought the world of the young—the marriage mart of the Beautiful once more. Alas! if my eye was captured for a moment, it was by something that reminded me of you. I saw a faultless face, radiant with its virgin blush; moved to it, I drew near—sighing, turned away; it was not you! I heard the silvery laugh of a life fresh as an April morn. 'Hark!' I said, 'is not that the sweet mirth-note at which all my cares were dispelled!' Listening, I forgot my weight of years. Why? because listening, I remembered you. 'Heed not the treacherous blush and the beguiling laugh,' whispered Prudence. 'Seek in congenial mind a calm companion to thine own.'

Mind !—oh frigid pedantry ! Mind !—had not yours been a volume open to my eyes; in every page methought, some lovely poet-truth never revealed to human sense before ! No; you had killed to me all womanhood ! Woo another !—wed another ! 'Hush,' I said, 'it *shall* be. Eighteen years since we parted seeing her not, she remains eternally the same ! Seeing her again, the very change that time must have brought will cure.' I saw you—all the Past rushed back in that stolen moment. I fled—never more to dream that I can shake off the curse of memory—blent with each drop of my blood—woven with each tissue—throbbing in each nerve—bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh—poison-root from which every thought buds to wither—the curse to have loved and to have trusted you ! "

" Merciful heaven ! can I bear this ? " cried Caroline, clasping her hands to her bosom. " And is my sin so great—is it so unpardonable ! Oh, if in a heart so noble, in a nature so great, mine was the unspeakable honor to inspire an affection thus enduring, must it be only—only as a curse ! Why can I not repair the past ? You have not ceased to love me. Call it hate—it is love still ! And now, no barrier between our lives, can I never, never again—never, now that I know I am less unworthy of you by the very anguish I feel to have so stung you—can I never again be the Caroline of old ! "

" Ha, ha ! " burst forth the unrelenting man, with a bitter laugh !—" see the real coarseness of a woman's nature under all its fine-spun frippery ! Behold these delicate creatures, that we scarcely dare to woo; how little they even comprehend the idolatry they inspire ! The Caroline of old ! Lo, the virgin whose hand we touched with knightly homage, whose first bashful kiss was hallowed as the gale of paradise, deserts us, sells herself at the altar —sanctifies there her very infidelity to us; and when years have passed, and a death has restored her freedom, she comes to us as if she had never pillowed her head on another's bosom, and says, 'Can I not again be the Caroline of old ! ' We men are too rude to forgive the faithless. Where is the Caroline I loved ? *You*—are—my Lady Montfort ! Look round. On these turfs, you, then a child, played beside my children. They are dead, but less dead to me than you. Never dreamed I then that a creature so fair would be other than a child to my grave and matured existence.

" Then, if I glanced towards your future, I felt no pang to picture you grown to womanhood—another's bride. My hearth had for years been widowed, I had no thought of second nuptials. My son would live to enjoy my wealth, and realize my cherished dreams—my son was snatched from me ! Who alone had the power to comfort ?—who alone had the courage to steal into the darkened room where I sate mourning ? sure that in her voice there would be consolation, and the sight of her sympathizing tears would chide away the bitterness of mine ?—who but the Caroline of old ! Ah, you are weeping now. But Lady Montfort's tears have no talisman to me ! You were then still a child—as a child, my soothing angel—A year or so more, my daughter, to whom all my pride of House—all my hope of race, had been consigned—she whose happiness I valued so much more than my ambition, that I had refused her hand to your young Lord of Montfort—puppet that stripped of the millinery of titles, was not worthy to replace a doll !—my daughter, I folded her one night in my arms,—I implored her to confide in me if ever she nursed a hope that I could further—knew a grief that I could banish; and she promised—and she bent her forehead to my blessing—and before daybreak she had fled with a man whose very touch was dishonor and pollution, and was lost to me for ever. . . .

" Then, when I came hither to vent at my father's grave the indignant grief I suffered not the world to see, you and your mother (she who professed for me such loyal friendship, such ineffaceable gratitude), you two came kindly to share my solitude—and then, then you were a child no more !—and a sun that had never gilt my life, brightened out of the face of the Caroline of old ! " He paused a moment, heeding not her bitter weeping; he was rapt from the present hour itself by the excess of that anguish which is to woe what ecstasy is to joy—swept along by the flood of thoughts that had been pent within his breast through the solitary days and haunted nights, which had made the long transition-state from his manhood's noon to its gathering eve. And in that pause there came from

afar off a melodious, melancholy strain—softly, softly borne over the cold blue waters—softly, softly through the sere autumnal leaves—the music of the magic flute!

"Hark!" he said, "do you not remember? Look to that beech-tree yonder! Summer clothed it then! Do you not remember! as under that tree we stood—that same, same note came, musical as now, undulating with rise and fall—came, as if to interpret, by a voice from fairyland, the beatings of my own mysterious heart. You had been pleading for pardon to one less ungrateful—less perfidious—than my comforter proved herself. I had listened to you, wondering why anger and wrong seemed banished from the world; and I murmured. in answer, without conscious thought of myself, 'Happy the man whose faults your bright charity will admonish—whose griefs your tenderness will chase away! But when, years hence children are born to yourself, spare me the one who shall most resemble you, to replace the daughter whom I can only sincerely pardon when something else can spring up to my desolate being something that I can cherish without the memory of falsehood and the dread of shame.' Yes, as I ceased, came that music; and as it thrilled through the summer air, I turned and met your eyes—turned and saw your blush—turned and heard some faint faltering words drowning the music with diviner sweetness; add suddenly I knew as by a revelation, that the Child I had fostered had grown the Woman whom I loved.—My own soul was laid bare to me by the flash of hope. Over the universe rushed light and color! Oh, the Caroline of old! What wonder that she became so fatally, so unspeakably beloved! As some man in ancient story, banished from his native land, is told by an oracle to seek a happier isle in undiscovered seas—freights with his all a single bark—collects on his wandering altar the last embers of his abandoned hearth—places beside it his exiled household gods; so all that my life had left to me, hallowing and hallowed, I stored in you. . . . . I tore myself from the old native soil, the old hardy skies.

"Through Time's wide ocean I saw but the promised golden isle. Fables, fables!—lying oracle!—sunken vessel!—visionary isle! And life to me had till then been so utterly without love!—had passed in such arid labors, without a holyday of romance—all the fountains of the unknown passion sealed till the spell struck the rock, and every wave, every drop sparkled fresh to a single star. Yet my boyhood, like other men's, had dreamed of its Ideal. There, at last that Ideal, come to life, bloomed before me; there, under those beech-trees—the Caroline of old. O wretched woman, now weeping at my side, well may you weep! Never can earth give you back such love as you lost in mine."

"I know it, I know it—fool that I was—miserable fool!"

"Ay, but comfort yourself—wilder and sadder folly in myself! Your mother was right. 'The vain child,' she said, knows not her own heart. She is new to the world—has seen none of her own years. For your sake, as for hers, I must insist on the experiment of absence. A year's ordeal—see if she is then of the same mind.' I marvelled at her coldness; proudly I submitted to her reasonings; fearlessly I confided the result to you. Ah! how radiant was your smile, when, in the parting hour, I said, 'Summer and you will return again!' In vain, on pretence that the experiment should be complete, did your mother carry you abroad, and exact from us both the solemn promise that not even a letter should pass between us—that our troth, made thus conditional, should be a secret to all—in vain, if meant to torture me with doubt. In my creed, a doubt is itself a treason. How lovely grew the stern face of Ambition!—how Fame seemed as a messenger from me to you! In the sound of applause I said, 'They cannot shut out the air that will carry that sound to her ears! All that I can win from Honor shall be my marriage gifts to my queenly bride.' See that arrested pile—begun at my son's birth, stopped awhile at his death, recommenced on a statelier plan when I thought of your footstep on its floors—your shadow on its walls. Stopped now for ever! Architects can build a palace; can they build a home? But you—you—you, all the while—your smile on another's suit—your thoughts on another's hearth!"

"Not so!—not so! Your image never forsook me. I was giddy, thoughtless, dazzled, entangled; and I told you in the letter you returned to me—told you that I had been deceived!"

"Patience—patience! Deceived! Do you imagine that I do not see all that passed as in a magician's glass? Caroline Montfort, you never loved me; you never knew what love was. Thrown suddenly into the gay world, intoxicated by the effect of your own beauty, my sombre figure gradually faded dim—pale ghost indeed in the atmosphere of flowers and lustres, rank with the breath of flatterers. Then came my lord the Marquess—a cousin, privileged to familiar intimacy, to visit at will, to ride with you, dance with you, sit side by side with you in quiet corners of thronging ball-rooms, to call you 'Caroline.' Tut, tut—ye are only cousins, and cousins are as brothers and sisters in the affectionate House of Vipont; and gossips talk, and young ladies envy—finest match in all England is the pretty-faced Lord of Montfort! And your mother, who had said, 'Wait a year' to Guy Darrell, must have dreamed of the cousin, and schemed for his coronet, when she said it. And I was unseen, and I must not write; and the absent are always in the wrong—when cousins are present! And I hear your mother speak of me—hear the soft sound of her damaging praises. 'Another long speech from your clever admirer! Don't fancy he frets; that kind of man thinks of nothing but blue-books and politics.' And your cousin proposes, and you say with a sigh, 'No: I am bound to Guy Darrell;' and your mother says to my Lord, 'Wait, and still come—as a cousin!' And then, day by day, the sweet Mrs. Lyndsay drops into your ear the hints that shall poison your heart. Some fable is dressed to malign me; and you cry, ''Tis not true; prove it true, or I still keep my faith to Guy Darrell.' Then comes the kind compact—'If the story be false, my cousin must go.' 'And if it be true, you will be my own duteous child. Alas! your poor cousin is breaking his heart. A lawyer of forty has a heart made of parchment!' Aha! you were entangled, and of course deceived! Your letter did not explain what was the tale told to you.

"I care not a rush what it was. It is enough for me to know, that if you had loved me, you would have loved me the more for every tale that belied me. So the tale was credited, because a relief to credit it. So the compact was kept—so the whole bargain hurried over in elegant privacy—place of barter an ambassador's chapel. Bauble for bauble—a jilt's faith for a mannikin's coronet. Four days before the year of trial expired, 'Only four days more!' I exclaimed, drunk with rapture. The journals lie before me. Three columns to Guy Darrell's speech last night; a column more to its effect on a senate, on an empire; and two lines—two little lines—to the sentence that struck Guy Darrell out of the world of men! 'Marriage in high life.—Marquess of Montfort—Caroline Lyndsay.' And the sun did not fall from heaven! Vulgarest of ends to the tritest of romances! In the gay world these things happen every day. Young ladies are privileged to give hopes to one man—their hands to another. 'Is the sin so unpardonable?' you ask, with ingenuous simplicity. Lady Montfort, that depends! Reflect! What was my life before I put it into your keeping! Barren of happiness, I grant—saddened, solitary—to myself a thing of small value. But what was that life to others?—a thing full of warm beneficence, of active uses, of hardy powers fitted to noble ends! In paralyzing that life as it was to others, there may be sin wider and darker than the mere infidelity to love. And now do you dare to ask, 'Can I again be the Caroline of old'?"

"I ask nothing—not even pardon," said the miserable woman. "I might say something to show where you misjudge me—something that might palliate; but no, let it be." Her accents were so drearily hopeless that Darrell abruptly withdrew his eyes from her face, as if fearful that the sight of her woe might weaken his resolve. She had turned mecanically back. They walked on in gloomy silence side by side, away now from the lake—back under the barbed thorn-tree—back by the moss-grown crag—back by the hollow trunks, and over the fallen leaves of trees that had defied the storms of centuries, to drop, perhaps, brittle and sapless, some quiet day when every wind is lulled.

The flute had ceased its music; the air had grown cold and piercing; the little park was soon traversed; the gate came in sight, and the humble vehicle without it. Then, involuntarily, both stopped; and on each there came at once the consciousness that they were about to part—part, never perhaps in this world to meet again; and, with all that had been said, so much unspoken—their hearts so full of what, alas! their lips could not speak.

"Lady Montfort," at length said Darrell.

At the sound of her name she shivered.

"I have addressed you rudely—harshly—"

"No—no—"

"But that was the last exercise of a right which I now resign for ever. I spoke to her who had once been Caroline Lyndsay; some gentler words are due to the widow of Lord Montfort. Whatever the wrongs you have inflicted on me—wrongs inexpiable—I recognize no less in your general nature qualities that would render you, to one whom you really loved and had never deceived, the blessing I had once hoped you would prove to me."

She shook her head impatiently, piteously.

"I know that in an ill-assorted union, and amidst all the temptations to which flattered beauty is exposed, your conduct has been without reproach. Forget the old man whose thoughts should now be on his grave."

"Hush, hush—have human mercy!"

"I withdraw and repent my injustice to your motives in the protection you have given to the poor girl whom Lionel would wed; I thank you for that protection,—though I refuse consent to my kinsman's prayer. Whatever her birth, I must be glad to know that she whom Lionel so loves is safe from a wretch like Losely. More—one word more—wait—it is hard for me to say it—Be happy!—I cannot pardon, but I *can* bless you. Farewell for ever!"

More overpoweringly crushed by his tenderness than his wrath, before Caroline could recover the vehemence of her sobs, he had ceased—he was gone—lost in the close gloom of a neighboring thicket, his hurried headlong path betrayed by the rustle of mournful boughs swinging back with their withered leaves.

CHAPTER II.

RETROSPECT.

There is a place at which three roads meet, sacred to that mysterious goddess called Diana on earth, Luna, or the Moon, in heaven, and Hecate in the infernal regions. At this place pause the virgins permitted to take their choice of the three roads. Few give their preference to that which is vowed to the goddess in her name of Diana: that road, cold and barren, is clothed by no roses and myrtles. Roses and myrtles veil the entrance to both the others, and in both the others Hymen has much the same gay-looking temples. But which of those two leads to the celestial Luna, or which of them conducts to the infernal Hecate, not one nymph in fifty divines. If thy heart should misgive thee, O nymph!—if, though cloud veil the path to the Moon, and sunshine gild that to pale Hecate—thine instinct recoils from the sunshine, while thou darest not adventure the cloud—thou hast still a choice left—thou hast still the safe road of Diana. Hecate, O nymph, is the goddess of ghosts. If thou takest *her* path, look not back, for the ghosts are behind thee.

When we slowly recover from the tumult and passion of some violent distress, a peculiar stillness falls upon the mind, and the atmosphere around it becomes in that stillness appallingly clear. We knew not, while wrestling with our woe, the extent of its ravages. As a land the day after a flood, as a field the day after a battle, is the sight of our own sorrow, when we no longer have to stem its raging, but to endure the destruction it has made. Distinct before Caroline Montfort's vision stretched the waste of her misery—the Past, the Present, the Future—all seemed to blend in one single Desolation. A strange thing it is how all time will converge itself, as it were, into the burning-glass of a moment! There runs a popular superstition that it is thus, in the instant of death; that our whole existence crowds itself on the glazing eye—a panorama of all we have done on earth—just as the soul restores to the earth its garment. Certes, there are hours in our being, long before the last and dreaded one, when this phenomenon comes to warn us that, if memory were always active, time would be never gone. Rose before this woman—who, whatever the justice of Darrell's bitter reproaches, had a nature lovely enough to justify his anguish at her loss—the image of herself at that turning-point of life, when the morning mists are dimmed on our way, yet when a path chosen is a fate decided. Yes; she had excuses, not urged to the judge who sentenced, nor estimated to their full extent by the stern equity with which, amidst suffering and wrath, he had desired to weigh her cause.

Caroline's mother, Mrs. Lyndsay, was one of those parents who acquire an extraordinary influence over their children by the union of caressing manners with obstinate resolves. She never lost control of her temper nor hold on her object. A slight, delicate, languid creature too, who would be sure to go into a consumption if unkindly crossed. With much

strong common sense, much knowledge of human nature, egotistical, worldly, scheming, heartless, but withal so pleasing, so gentle, so bewitchingly despotic, that it was like living with an electro-biologist, who unnerves you by a look to knock you down with a feather. In only one great purpose of her life had Mrs. Lyndsay failed. When Darrell, rich by the rewards of his profession and the bequest of his namesake, had entered Parliament, and risen into that repute which confers solid and brilliant station, Mrs. Lyndsay conceived the idea of appropriating to herself his honors and his wealth by a second Hymen. Having so long been domesticated in his house during the life of Mrs. Darrell, an intimacy as of near relations had been established between them. Her soft manners attached to her children; and after Mrs. Darrell's death rendered it necessary that she should find a home of her own, she had an excuse in Matilda's affection for her and for Caroline, to be more frequently before Darrell's eyes, and consulted by him yet more frequently, than when actually a resident in his house. To her Darrell confided the proposal which had been made to him by the old Marchioness of Montfort, for an alliance between her young grandson and his sole surviving child.

Wealthy as was the House of Vipont, it was amongst its traditional maxims that wealth wastes if not perpetually recruited. Every third generation at farthest, it was the duty of that house to marry an heiress. Darrell's daughter, just seventeen, not yet brought out, would be an heiress, it he pleased to make her so, second to none whom the research of the Marchioness had detected within the drawing-rooms and nurseries of the three kingdoms. The proposal of the venerable peeress was at first very naturally gratifying to Darrell. It was an euthanasia for the old knightly race to die into a House that was an institution in the empire, and revive phœnix-like in a line of peers, who might perpetuate the name of the heiress whose quarterings they would annex to their own, and sign themselves "Darrell Montfort." Said Darrell inly, "On the whole, such a marriage would have pleased my poor father." It did not please Mrs. Lyndsay. The bulk of Darrell's fortune thus settled away, he himself would be a very different match for Mrs. Lyndsay; nor was it to her convenience that Matilda should be thus hastily disposed of, and the strongest link of connection between Fulham and Carlton Gardens severed. Mrs. Lyndsay had one golden rule, which I respectfully point out to ladies who covet popularity and power: She never spoke ill of any one whom she wished to injure. She did not, therefore, speak ill of the Marquess to Darrell, but she so praised him that her praise alarmed. She ought to know the young peer well; she was a good deal with the Marchioness, who liked her pretty manners.

Till then, Darrell had only noticed this green Head of the Viponts as a neat-looking Head, too modest to open its lips. But he now examined the Head with anxious deliberation, and finding it of the poorest possible kind of wood, with a heart to match, Guy Darrell had the audacity to reject, though with great courtesy, the idea of grafting the last plant of his line on a stem so pithless. Though, like men who are at once very affectionate and very busy, he saw few faults in his children, or indeed in any one he really loved, till the fault was forced on him, he could not but be aware that Matilda's sole chance of becoming a happy and safe wife, was in uniting herself with such a husband as would at once win her confidence and command her respect. He trembled when he thought of her as the wife of a man whose rank would expose her to all fashionable temptations, and whose character would leave her without a guide or protector.

The Marquess, who obeyed his grandmother from habit, and who had lethargically sanctioned her proposals to Darrell, evinced the liveliest emotion he had ever yet betrayed when he learned that his hand was rejected. And if it were possible for him to carry so small a sentiment as pique into so large a passion as hate, from that moment he aggrandized his nature into hatred. He would have given half his lands to have spited Guy Darrell. Mrs. Lyndsay took care to be at hand to console him, and the Marchioness was grateful to her for taking that troublesome task upon herself. And in the course of their conversations Mrs. Lyndsay contrived to drop into his mind the egg of a project which she took a later occasion to hatch under her plumes of down. "There is but one kind of wife, my dear Montfort, who could increase your importance: you should marry a beauty;

next to royalty ranks beauty." The Head nodded, and seemed to ruminate for some moments, and then *à propos des bottes*, it let fall this mysterious monosyllable, "Shoes." By what process of ratiocination the Head had thus arrived at the feet, it is not for me to conjecture. All I know is that, from that moment, Mrs. Lyndsay bestowed as much thought upon Caroline's *chaussure*, as if, like Cinderella, Caroline's whole destiny in this world hung upon her slipper. With the feelings and the schemes that have been thus intimated, this sensible lady's mortification may well be conceived when she was startled by Darrell's proposal, not to herself, but to her daughter. Her egotism was profoundly shocked, her worldliness cruelly thwarted. With Guy Darrell for her own spouse, the Marquess of Montfort for her daughter's, Mrs. Lyndsay would have been indeed a considerable personage in the world.

But to lose Darrell for herself, the Marquess altogether—the idea was intolerable! Yet, since to have refused at once for her portionless daughter a man in so high a position, and to whom her own obligations were so great, was impossible, she adopted a policy, admirable for the craft of its conception and the dexterity of its execution. In exacting the condition of a year's delay, she made her motives appear so loftily disinterested, so magnanimously friendly! She could never forgive herself if he—he—the greatest, the best of men, were again rendered unhappy in marriage by her imprudence (hers, who owed to him her all!) — yes, imprudent indeed, to have thrown right in his way a pretty coquettish, girl ('for Caroline is coquettish, Mr. Darrell; most girls so pretty are at that silly age'). In short, she carried her point against all the eloquence Darrell could employ, and covered her designs by the semblance of the most delicate scruples, and the sacrifice of worldly advantages to the prudence which belongs to high principle and affectionate caution.

And what were Caroline's real sentiments for Guy Darrel? She understood them *now* on looking back. She saw herself as she was then—as she had stood under the beech-tree, when the heavenly pity that was at the core of her nature—when the venerating, grateful affection that had grown with her growth, made her yearn to be a solace and a joy to that grand and solitary life. Love him! O certainly she loved him, devotedly, fondly; but it was with the love of a child. She had not awakened then to the love of woman. Removed from his presence, suddenly thrown into the great world — yes, Darrell had sketched the picture with a stern, but not altogether an untruthful hand. He had not, however, fairly estimated the inevitable influence which a mother, such as Mrs. Lyndsay, would exercise over a girl so wholly inexperienced—so guileless, so unsuspecting, and so filially devoted. He could not appreciate—no man can—the mightiness of female cunning. He could not see how mesh upon mesh the soft Mrs. Lyndsay (pretty woman with pretty manners) wove her web round the "cousins," until Caroline, who at first had thought of the silent fairhaired young man only as the Head of her House, pleased with attention that kept aloof admirers, of whom she thought Guy Darrell might be more reasonably jealous, was appalled to hear her mother tell her that she was either the most heartless of coquettes, or poor Montfort was the most ill-used of men.

"But at this time Jasper Losely, under his name of Hammond, brought his wife from the French town at which they had been residing since their marriage, to see Mrs. Lyndsay and Caroline at Paris, and implore their influence to obtain a reconciliation with her father. Matilda soon learned from Mrs. Lyndsay, who affected the most enchanting candor, the nature of the engagement between Caroline and Darrell. She communicated the information to Jasper, who viewed it with very natural alarm. By reconciliation with Guy Darrell, Jasper understood something solid and practical—not a mere sentimental pardon, added to that paltry stipend of £700 a-year which he had just obtained—but the restoration to all her rights and expectancies of the heiress he had supposed himself to marry. He had by no means relinquished the belief that sooner or later Darrell would listen to the voice of Nature, and setttle all his fortune on his only child. But then, for the Voice of Nature to have fair play, it was clear that there should be no other child to plead for. And if Darrell were to marry again, and to have sons, what a dreadful dilemma it would be for the Voice of Nature!

Jasper was not long in discovering that

Caroline's engagement was not less unwelcome to Mrs. Lyndsay than to himself, and that she was disposed to connive at any means by which it might be annulled. Matilda was first employed to weaken the bond it was so desirable to sever. Matilda did not reproach, but she wept. She was sure *now* that she should be an outcast—her children beggars. Mrs. Lyndsay worked up this complaint with adroitest skill. Was Caroline sure that it was not most dishonorable—most treacherous—to rob her own earliest friend of the patrimony that would otherwise return to Matilda with Darrell's pardon? This idea became exquisitely painful to the high-spirited Caroline, but it could not counterpoise the conviction of the greater pain she should occasion to the breast that so confided in her faith, if that faith were broken. Step by step the intrigue against the absent one proceeded. Mrs. Lyndsay thoroughly understood the art of insinuating doubts. Guy Darrell, a man of the world, a cold-blooded lawyer, a busy politician, *he* break his heart for a girl! No, it was only the young, and especially the young when not remarkably clever, who broke their hearts for such trifles. Montfort, indeed—*there* was a man whose heart *could* be broken!—whose happiness *could* be blasted! Dear Guy Darrell had been only moved, in his proposals, by generosity.

"Something, my dear child, in your own artless words and manner, that made him fancy he had won your affections unknown to yourself!—an idea that he was bound as a gentleman to speak out! Just like him. He *has* that spirit of chivalry. But my belief is, that he is quite aware by this time how foolish such a marriage would be, and would thank you heartily if, at the year's end, he found himself free, and you happily disposed of elsewhere, etc., etc." The drama advanced. Mrs. Lyndsay evinced decided pulmonary symptons. Her hectic cough returned; she could not sleep; her days were numbered—a secret grief. Caroline implored frankness, and, clasped to her mother's bosom, and compassionately bedewed with tears, those hints were dropped into her ear which, though so worded as to show the most indulgent forbearance to Darrell, and rather, as if in compassion for his weakness than in abhorrence of his perfidy, made Caroline start with the indignation of revolted purity and outraged pride. "Were this true, all would be indeed at an end between us! But it is not true. Let it be proved." "But, my dear, dear child, I could not stir in a matter so delicate. I could not aid in breaking off a marriage so much to your worldly advantage, unless you could promise that, in rejecting Mr. Darrell, you would accept your cousin. In my wretched state of health, the anxious thought of leaving you in the world literally penniless would kill me at once."

"Oh, if Guy Darrell be false (but that is impossible!) do with me all you will; to obey and please you would be the only comfort left to me."

Thus was all prepared for the final *dénouement*. Mrs. Lyndsay had not gone so far without a reliance on the means to accomplish her object, and for these means she had stooped to be indebted to the more practical villany of Matilda's husband.

Jasper, in this visit to Paris, had first formed the connection, which completed the wickedness of his perverted nature, with that dark adventuress who has flitted shadow-like through part of this varying narrative. Gabrielle Desmarets was then in her youth, notorious only for the ruin she had inflicted on admiring victims, and the superb luxury with which she rioted on their plunder. Captivated by the personal advantages for which Jasper was then pre-eminently conspicuous, she willingly associated her fortunes with his own. Gabrielle was one of those incarnations of evil which no city but Paris can accomplish with the same epicurean refinement, and vitiate into the same cynical corruption. She was exceeding witty, sharply astute, capable of acting any part, carrying out any plot; and when it pleased her to simulate the decorous and immaculate gentlewoman, she might have deceived the most experienced *roué*.

Jasper presented this Artiste to his unsuspecting wife as a widow of rank, who was about to visit London, and who might be enabled to see Mr. Darrell, and intercede on their behalf. Matilda fell readily into the snare; the Frenchwoman went to London, with assumed name and title, and with servants completely in her confidence. And such (as the reader knows already) was that eloquent baroness who had pleaded to Darrell the cause of his penitent

daughter! No doubt the wily *Parisienne* had calculated on the effect of her arts and her charms, to decoy him into at least a passing forgetfulness of his faith to another. But if she could not succeed there, it might equally achieve the object in view to obtain the credit of that success. Accordingly, she wrote to one of her friends at Paris, letters stating that she had found a very rich admirer in a celebrated English statesman, to whom she was indebted for her establishment, etc.; and alluding, in very witty and satirical terms, to his matrimonial engagement with the young English beauty at Paris, who was then creating such a sensation—an engagement of which she represented her admirer to be heartily sick, and extremely repentant.

Without mentioning names, her descriptions were unmistakable. Jasper, of course, presented to Mrs. Lyndsay those letters (which, he said, the person to whom they were addressed had communicated to one of her own gay friends), and suggested that their evidence against Darrell would be complete in Miss Lyndsay's eyes if some one, whose veracity Caroline could not dispute, could corroborate the assertions of the letters; it would be quite enough to do so if Mr. Darrell were even seen entering or leaving the house of a person whose mode of life was so notorious. Mrs. Lyndsay, who, with her consummate craft, saved her dignity by affected blindness to the artifices at which she connived, declared that, in a matter of inquiry which involved the private character of a man so eminent, and to whom she owed so much, she would not trust his name to the gossip of others. She herself would go to London. She knew that odious, but too fascinating, Gabrielle by sight (as every one did who went to the opera or drove in the *Bois de Boulogne*.

Jasper undertook that the *Parisienne* should show herself at her balcony at a certain day at a certain hour, and at that hour Darrell should call and be admitted; and Mrs. Lyndsay allowed that that evidence would suffice. Sensible of the power over Caroline that she would derive if, with her habits of languor and her delicate health, she could say that she had undertaken such a journey to be convinced with her own eyes of a charge which, if true, would influence her daughter's conduct and destiny—Mrs. Lyndsay did go to London—did see Gabrielle Desmarets at her balcony—did see Darrell enter the house; and on her return to Paris did, armed with this testimony, and with the letters that led to it, so work upon her daughter's mind, that the next day the Marquess of Montfort was accepted. But the year of Darrell's probation was nearly expired; all delay would be dangerous—all explanation would be fatal, and must be forstalled. Nor could a long courtship be kept secret; Darrell might hear of it, and come over at once; and the Marquess's ambitious kinsfolk would not fail to interfere if the news of his intended marriage with a portionless cousin reached their ears. Lord Montfort, who was awed by Carr, and extremely afraid of his grandmother, was not less anxious for secresy and expedition than Mrs. Lyndsay herself.

Thus, then, Mrs. Lyndsay triumphed, and while her daughter was still under the influence of an excitement which clouded her judgment, and stung her into rashness of action as an escape from the torment of reflection—thus were solemnized Caroline's unhappy and splendid nuptials. The Marquess hired a villa in the delightful precincts of Fontainebleau for his honeymoon; that moon was still young when the Marquess said to himself, "I don't find that it produces honey." When he had first been attracted towards Caroline, she was all life and joy—too much of a child to pine for Darrell's absence, while credulously confident of their future union—her spirits naturally wild and lively, and the world, opening at her feet, so novel and so brilliant. This fresh gaiety had amused the Marquess—he felt cheated when he found it gone. Caroline might be gentle, docile, submissive; but those virtues, though of higher quality than glad animal spirits, are not so entertaining. His own exceeding sterility of mind and feeling was not apparent till in the *têtes-à-têtes* of conjugal life. A good-looking young man, with a thorough-bred air, who rides well, dances well, and holds his tongue, may, in all mixed societies, pass for a shy youth of sensitive genius!

But when he is your companion for life, and all to yourself, and you find that, when he does talk, he has neither an idea nor a sentiment—alas! alas for you, young bride, if you have ever known the charm of intellect, or the sweetness of sympathy! But it was not for Caroline to complain; struggling against her

own weight of sorrow, she had no immediate perception of her companion's vapidity. It was he, poor man, who complained. He just detected enough of her superority of intelligence to suspect that he was humiliated, while sure that he was bored. An incident converted his growing indifference into permanent dislike not many days after their marriage.

Lord Montfort, sauntering into Caroline's room, found her insensible on the floor—an open letter by her side. Summoning her maid to her assistance, he took the marital privilege of reading the letter, which had apparently caused her swoon. It was from Matilda, and written in a state of maddened excitement. Matilda had little enough of what is called heart; but she had an intense selfishness, which, in point of suffering, supplies the place of a heart. It was not because she could not feel for the wrongs of another that she could not feel anguish for her own. Arabella was avenged. The cold-blooded snake that had stung her met the fang of the cobra-capella.

Matilda had learned from some anonymous correspondent (probably a rival of Gabrielle's) of Jasper's *liaison* with that adventuress. But half recovered from her confinement, she had risen from her bed—hurried to Paris (for the pleasures of which her husband had left her) —seen this wretched Gabrielle—recognized in her the false baroness to whom Jasper had presented her—to whom, by Jasper's dictation, she had written such affectionate letters —whom she had employed to plead her cause to her father;—seen Gabrielle—seen her at her own luxurious apartment, Jasper at home there—burst into vehement wrath—roused up the cobra-capella; and on declaring that she would separate from her husband, go back to her father, tell her wrongs, appeal to his mercy, Gabrielle calmly replied, "Do so, and I will take care that your father shall know that your plea for his pardon through Madame la Baronne was a scheme to blacken his name, and to frustrate his marriage. Do not think that he will suppose you did not connive at a project so sly; he must know you too well, pretty innocent." No match for Gabrielle Desmarets, Matilda flung from the house, leaving Jasper whistling an air from *Figaro ;* returned alone to the French town from which she now wrote to Caroline, pouring out her wrongs, and, without seeming sensible that Caroline had been wronged too, expressing her fear that her father might believe her an accomplice in Jasper's plot, and refuse her the means to live apart from the wretch, upon whom she heaped every epithet that just indignation could suggest to a feeble mind.

The latter part of the letter, blurred and blotted, was incoherent, almost raving. In fact, Matilda was then seized by the mortal illness which hurried her to the grave. To the Marquess much of this letter was extremely uninteresting—much of it quite incomprehensible. He could not see why it should so overpoweringly affect his wife. Only those passages which denounced a scheme to frus trate some marriage meditated by Mr. Darrell made him somewhat uneasy, and appeared to him to demand explanation. But Caroline, in the anguish to which she awakened, forestalled his inquiries. To her but two thoughts were present—how she had wronged Darrell—how ungrateful and faithless she must seem to him; and in the impulse of her remorse, and in the child-like candor of her soul, artlessly, ingenuously, she poured out her feelings to the husband she had taken as counseller and guide, as if seeking to guard all her sorrow for the past from a sentiment that might render her less loyal to the reposibilities which linked her future to another's.

A man of sense would have hailed in so noble a confidence (however it might have pained him for the time) a guarantee for the happiness and security of his whole existence. He would have seen how distinct from that ardent love which in Caroline's new relation of life would have bordered upon guilt and been cautious as guilt against disclosing its secrets, was the infantine, venerating affection she had felt for a man so far removed from her by years and the development of intellect—an affection which a young husband, trusted with every thought, every feeling, might reasonably hope to eclipse. A little forbearance, a little of delicate and generous tenderness, at that moment, would have secured to Lord Montfort the warm devotion of a grateful heart, in which the grief that overflowed was not for the irreplaceable loss of an earlier lover, but the repentant shame for wrong and treachery to a confiding friend.

But it is in vain to ask from any man that which is not in him ! Lord Montfort listened

with sullen, stolid displeasure. That Caroline should feel the slightest pain at any cause which had cancelled her engagement to that odious Darrell, and had raised her to the rank of his marchioness, was a crime in his eyes never to be expiated. He considered, not without reason, that Mrs. Lindsay had shamefully deceived him; and fully believed that she had been an accomplice with Jasper in that artifice which he was quite gentleman enough to consider placed those who had planned it out of the pale of his acquaintance. And when Caroline, who had been weeping too vehemently to read her lord's countenance, came to a close, Lord Montfort took up his hat and said, "I beg never to hear again of this lawyer and his very disreputable family connections. As you say, you and your mother have behaved very ill to him; but you don't seem to understand that you have behaved much worse to me. As to condescending to write to him, and enter into explanations how you came to be Lady Montfort, it would be so lowering to me that I would never forgive it—never. I would just as soon that you run away at once;—sooner. As for Mrs Lyndsay, I shall forbid her entering my house. When you have done crying, order your things to be packed up. I shall return to England to-morrow."

That was perhaps the longest speech Lord Montfort ever addressed to his wife; perhaps it was also the rudest. From that time he regarded her as some Spaniard of ancient days might regard a guest on whom he was compelled to bestow the rites of hospitality—to whom he gave a seat at his board, a chair at his hearth, but for whom he entertained a profound aversion, and kept at invincible distance, with all the ceremony of dignified dislike. Once only during her wedded life Caroline again saw Darrell. It was immediately on her return to England, and little more than a month after her marriage. It was the day on which Parliament had been prorogued preparatory to its dissolution—the last Parliament of which Guy Darrell was a member. Lady Montfort's carriage was detained in the throng with which the ceremonial had filled the streets, and Darrell passed it on horseback. It was but one look in that one moment; and the look never ceased to haunt her—a look of such stern disdain, but also of such deep despair. No language can exaggerate the eloquence which there is in a human countenance, when a great and tortured spirit speaks out from it accusingly to a soul that comprehends.

The crushed heart, the ravaged existence, were bared before her in that glance, as clearly as to a wanderer through the night are the rents of the precipice in the flash of the lightning. So they encountered—so, without a word, they parted. To him that moment decided the flight from active life to which his hopeless thoughts had of late been wooing the jaded, weary man. In safety to his very conscience, he would not risk the certainty thus to encounter one whom it convulsed his whole being to remember was another's wife. In that highest and narrowest sphere of the great London world to which Guy Darrell's political distinction condemned his social life, it was impossible but that he should be brought frequently into collision with Lord Montfort, the Head of a House with which Darrell himself was connected—the most powerful partrician of the party of which Darrell was so conspicuous a chief. Could he escape Lady Montfort's presence, her name at least would be continually in his ears. From that fatal beauty he could no more hide than from the sun.

This thought, and the terror it occasioned him, completed his resolve on the instant. The next day he was in the groves of Fawley, and amazed the world by dating from that retreat a farewell address to his constituents. A few days after, the news of his daughter's death reached him; and as that event became known it accounted to many for his retirement for a while from public life.

But to Caroline Montfort, and to her alone, the secret of a career blasted, a fame renounced, was unmistakably revealed. For a time she was tortured, in every society she entered, by speculation and gossip which brought before her the memory of his genius, the accusing sound of his name. But him, who withdraws himself from the world, the world soon forgets; and by degrees Darrell became as little spoken of as the dead.

Mrs. Lyndsay had never, during her schemes on Lord Montfort, abandoned her own original design on Darrell. And when, to her infinite amaze and mortification, Lord Montfort, before the first month of his marriage expired, took care, in the fewest possible words, to dispel

her dream of governing the House, and residing in the houses of Vipont, as the lawful regent during the life-long minority to which she had condemned both the submissive Caroline and the lethargic Marquess, she hastened by letter to exculpate herself to Darrell—laid, of course, all the blame on Caroline. Alas! had not she always warned him that Caroline was not worthy of him?—him, the greatest, the best of men, etc. etc. Darrell replied by a single cut of his trenchant sarcasm—sarcasm which shone through her cushion of down and her veil of gauze like the sword of Saladin. The old Marchioness turned her back upon Mrs. Lyndsay. Lady Selina was crushingly civil. The pretty woman with pretty manners, no better off for all the misery she had occasioned, went to Rome, caught cold, and having no one to nurse her as Caroline had done, fell at last into a real consumption, and faded out of the world elegantly and spitefully, as fades a rose that still leaves its thorns behind it.

Caroline's nature grew developed and exalted by the responsibilities she had accepted, and by the purity of her grief. She submitted, as a just retribution, to the solitude and humiliation of her wedded lot; she earnestly, virtuously strove to banish from her heart every sentiment that should recall to her more of Darrell than the remorse of having darkened a life that had been to her childhood so benignant, and to her youth, so confiding. As we have seen her, at the mention of Darrell's name—at the illusion to his griefs—fly to the side of her ungenial lord, though he was to her but as the owner of the name she bore, so it was the saving impulse of a delicate, watchful conscience that kept her as honest in thought as she was irreproachable in conduct. But vainly, in summoning her intellect to the relief of her heart—vainly had she sought to find in the world friendships, companionships, that might eclipse the memory of the mind so lofty in its antique mould—so tender in its depths of unsuspected sweetness—which had been withdrawn from her existence before she could fully comprehend its rarity, or appreciate its worth.

At last she became free once more; and then she had dared thoroughly to examine into her own heart, and into the nature of that hold which the image of Darrell still retained on its remembrances. And precisely because she was convinced that she had succeeded in preserving her old childish affection for him free from the growth into that warm love which would have been guilt if so encouraged, she felt the more free to volunteer the atonement which might permit her to dedicate herself to his remaining years.

Thus, one day, after a conversation with Alban Morley, in which Alban had spoken of Darrell as the friend, almost the virtual guardian, of her infancy; and, alluding to a few lines just received from him, brought vividly before Caroline the picture of Darrell's melancholy wanderings, and blighted life,—thus had she, on the impulse of the moment, written the letter which had reached Darrell at Malta. In it she referred but indirectly to the deceit that had been practiced on herself—far too delicate to retail a scandal which she felt to be an insult to his dignity, in which, too, the deceiving parties were his daughter's husband and her own mother. No doubt every true woman can understand why she thus wrote to Darrell, and every true man can equally comprehend why that letter failed in its object, and was returned to her in scorn. Hers was the yearning of meek, passionless affection, and his the rebuke of sensitive, embittered, indignant love.

But now, as all her past, with its interior life, glided before her, by a grief the most intolerable she had yet known, the woman became aware that it was no longer penitence for the injured friend—it was despair for the lover she had lost. In that stormy interview, out of all the confused and struggling elements of her life-long self-reproach, LOVE — the love of woman—had flashed suddenly, luminously, as the love of youth at first sight. Strange—but the very disparity of year's seemed gone!

She, the matured, sorrowful woman, was so much nearer to the man, still young in heart, and little changed in person than the gay girl of seventeen had been to the grave friend of forty! Strange, but those vehement reproaches had wakened emotions deeper in the core of the wild mortal breast than all that early chivalrous homage which had exalted her into the ideal of dreaming poets. Strange, strange, strange! But where there is nothing strange, *there*—is there ever love?

And with this revelation of her own altered heart, came the clearer and fresher insight into the nature and character of the man she loved.

Hitherto she had recognized but his virtues—now she beheld his failings! beholding them *as if virtues*, loved him more; and, loving him, more despaired. She recognized that all-pervading indomitable pride, which, interwoven with his sense of honor, became as relentless as it was unrevengeful. She comprehended now, that the more he loved her, the less he would forgive; and, recalling the unexpected gentleness of his farewell words, she felt that, in his promised blessing, lay the sentence that annihilated every hope.

CHAPTER III.

Whatever the number of a man's friends, there will be times in his life when he has one too few; but if he has only one enemy, he is lucky indeed if he has not one too many.

A COLD night; sharp frost; winter set in. The shutters are closed, the curtains drawn, the fire burns clear, and the lights are softly shaded in Alban Morley's drawing-room. The old bachelor is at home again. He had returned that day; sent to Lionel to come to him; and Lionel had already told him what had transpired in his absence—from the identification of Waife with William Losely, to Lady Montfort's visit to Fawley, which had taken place two days before, and of which she had informed Lionel by a few hasty lines, stating her inability to soften Mr. Darrell's objections to the alliance between Lionel and Sophy; severely blaming herself that those objections had not more forcibly presented themselves to her own mind, and concluding with expressions of sympathy, and appeals to fortitude, in which, however brief, the exquisite kindness of her nature so diffused its charm, that the soft words soothed insensibily, like those sounds which in Nature itself do soothe us we know not why.

The poor Colonel found himself in the midst of painful subjects. Though he had no very keen sympathy for the sorrows of lovers, and no credulous faith in everlasting attachments, Lionel's portraiture of the young girl, who formed so mysterious a link between the two men who, in varying ways, had touched the finest springs in his own heart, compelled a compassionate and chivalrous interest, and he was deeply impressed by the quiet of Lionel's dejection. The young man uttered no complaints of the inflexibility with which Darrell had destroyed his elysium. He bowed to the will with which it was in vain to argue, and which it would have been a criminal ingratitude to defy. But his youth seemed withered up; down-eyed and listless he sank into that stupor of despondency which so drearily simulates the calm of resignation.

"I have but one wish now," said he, "and that is to change at once into some regiment on active service. I do not talk of courting danger and seeking death. That would be either a senseless commonplace, or a threat, as it were, to Heaven! But I need some vehemence of action—some positive and irresistible call upon honor or duty that may force me to contend against this strange heaviness that settles down on my whole life. Therefore, I entreat you so to arrange for me, and break it to Mr. Darrell in such terms as may not needlessly pain him by the obtrusion of my sufferings. For, while I know him well enough to be convinced that nothing could move him from resolves in which he had intrenched, as in a citadel, his pride or his creed of honor, I am sure that he would take into his own heart all the grief which those resolves occasioned to another's."

"You do him justice there," cried Alban; "you are a noble fellow to understand him so well! Sir, you have in you the stuff that makes English gentlemen such generous soldiers."

"Action, action, action," exclaimed Lionel. "Strife, strife! No other chance of cure. Rest is so crushing, solitude so dismal."

Lo! how contrasted the effect of a similar cause of grief at different stages of life! Chase the first day-dreams of our youth, and we cry, "Action—Strife!" In that cry, unconsciously to ourselves, HOPE speaks and proffers worlds of emotion not yet exhausted. Disperse the last golden illusion in which the image of happiness cheats our experienced manhood, and HOPE is silent; she has no more worlds to offer—unless, indeed, she drop her earthly attributes, change her less solemn name, and float far out of sight as "FAITH!"

Alban made no immediate reply to Lionel; but, seating himself still more comfortably in

his chair—planting his feet still more at ease upon his fender—the kindly Man of the World silently revolved all the possible means by which Darrell might yet be softened and Lionel rendered happy. His reflections dismayed him. "Was there ever such untoward luck," he said at last, and peevishly, "that out of the whole world you should fall in love with the very girl against whom Darrell's feelings (prejudices if you please) must be mailed in adamant! Convinced, and apparently with every reason, that she is not his daughter's child, but however innocently, an impostor, how can he receive her as his young kinsman's bride! How can we expect it?"

"But," said Lionel, "if, on farther investigation, she prove to be his daughter's child—the sole surviving representative of his line and name?"

"*His* name! No! Of the name of Losely—the name of that turbulent sharper who may yet die on the gibbit—of that poor, dear, lovable rascal Willy, who was goose enough to get himself transported for robbery!—a felon's grandchild the representative of Darrell's line! But how on earth came Lady Montfort to favor so wild a project, and encourage you to share in it?—she who ought to have known Darrell better?"

"Alas! she saw but Sophy's exquisite, simple virtues, and inborn grace; and, believing her claim to Darrell's lineage, Lady Montfort thought but of the joy and blessing one so good and so loving might bring to his joyless hearth. She was not thinking of morbid pride and mouldering ancestors, but of soothing charities and loving ties. And Lady Montfort, I now suspect, in her scheme for our happiness—for Darrell's—had an interest which involved her own!"

"Her own!"

"Yes; I see it all now."

"See what? you puzzle me."

"I told you that Darrell, in his letter to me, wrote with great bitterness of Lady Montfort."

"Very natural that he should. Who would not resent such interference?"

"Listen. I told you that, at his own command, I sent to her that letter; that she, on receiving it, went herself to Fawley, to plead our cause. I was sanguine of the result."

"Why?"

"Because he who is in love has a wondrous intuition into all the mysteries of love in others; and when I read Darrell's letter, I felt sure that he had once loved—loved still, perhaps—the woman he so vehemently reproached."

"Ha!" said the Man of the World, intimate with Guy Darrell from his school-days—"Ha! is it possible! And they say that I know everything! You were sanguine,—I understand. Yes, if your belief were true—if there were some old attachment that could be revived—some old misunderstanding explained away—stop; let me think. True, true—it was just after her marriage that he fled from the world. Ah, my dear Lionel; light, light! light dawns on me! Not without reason were you sanguine. Your hand, my dear boy; I see hope for you at last. For if the sole reason that prevented Darrell contracting a second marriage was the unconquered memory of a woman like Lady Montfort (where, indeed, her equal in beauty, in dispositions so akin to his own ideal of womanly excellence?)—and if she too has some correspondent sentiment for him, why, then, indeed you might lose all chance of being Darrell's sole heir; you Sophy might forfeit the hateful claim to be the sole scion on his ancient tree; but it is precisely by those losses that Lionel Haughton might gain the bride he covets; and if this girl prove to be what these Loselys affirm, that very marriage, which is now so repugnant to Darrell, ought to insure his blessing.

"Were he himself to marry again—had he rightful representatives and heirs in his own sons—he should rejoice in the nuptials that secured to his daughter's child so honorable a name and so tender a protector. And as for inheritance, you have not been reared to expect it; you have never counted on it. You would receive a fortune sufficiently ample to restore your ancestral station; your career will add honors to fortune. Yes, yes; that is the sole way out of all these difficulties. Darrell must marry again; Lady Montfort must be his wife. Lionel shall be free to choose her whom Lady Montfort approves—be friends—no matter what her birth; and I—I—Alban Morley—shall have an arm-chair by two smiling hearths."

At this moment there was heard a violent ring at the bell, a loud knock at the street door; and presently, following close on the servant, and pushing him aside as he asked what

name to announce, a woman, severely dressed in iron-grey, with a strongly-marked and haggard countenance, hurried into the room, and, striding right up to Alban Morley, as he rose from his seat, grasped his arm, and whispered into his ear, "Lose not a minute—come with me instantly—as you value the safety, perhaps the life, of Guy Darrell!"

"Guy Darrell!" exclaimed Lionel, overhearing her, despite the undertones of her voice.

"Who are you?" she said, turning fiercely, "are you one of his family?"

"His kinsman—almost his adopted son—Mr. Lionel Haughton," said the Colonel. "But pardon me, madam—who are you?"

Do you not remember me? Yet you were so often in Darrell's house that you must have seen my face, as you have learned from your friend how little cause I have to care for him or his. Look again; I am that Arabella Fossett who—"

"Ah, I remember now; but—"

"But I tell you that Darrell is in danger, and this night. Take money; to be in time you must hire a special train. Take arms, though to be used only in self-defence. Take your servant, if he is brave. this young kinsman—let him come too. There is only one man to resist; but that man," she said, with a wild kind of pride, "would have the strength and courage of ten, were his cause not that which may make the strong man weak, and the bold man craven. It is not a matter for the officers of justice, for law, for scandal; the service is to be done in secret, by friends, by kinsmen; for the danger that threatens Darrell—stoop—stoop, Colonel Morley—close in your ear;" and into his ear she hissed, "for the danger that threatens Darrell in his house this night is from the man whose name his daughter bore. That is why I come to you. To you I need not say, 'Spare his life—Jasper Losley's life.' Jasper Losely's death as a midnight robber would be Darrell's intolerable shame! Quick, quick, quick!—come, come!"

BOOK TENTH.

CHAPTER I.

Brute-Force.

We left Jasper Losely resting for the night at the small town near Fawley. The next morning he walked on to the old manor-house. It was the same morning in which Lady Montfort had held her painful interview with Darrell; and just when Losely neared the gate that led into the small park, he saw her re-enter the hired vehicle in waiting for her. As the carriage rapidly drove past the miscreant, Lady Montfort looked forth from the window to snatch a last look at the scenes still so dear to her, through eyes blinded by despairing tears. Jasper thus caught sight of her countenance, and recognized her, though she did not even notice him. Surprised at the sight, he halted by the palings. What could have brought Lady Montfort there? Could the intimacy his fraud had broken off so many years ago be renewed? If so, why the extreme sadness so evident on the face of which he had caught but a hurried, rapid glance? Be that as it might, it was no longer of the interest to him it had once been; and after pondering on the circumstance a minute or two, he advanced to the gate. But while his hand was on the latch, he again paused; how should he obtain admission to Darrell?—how announce himself? If in his own name, would not exclusion be certain?—if as a stranger on business, would Darrell be sure to receive him?

As he was thus cogitating, his ear, which, with all his other organs of sense, was constitutionally fine as a savage's, caught sound of a faint rustle among the boughs of a thick copse which covered a part of the little park, terminating at its pales. The rustle came nearer and nearer; the branches were rudely displaced; and in a few moments more Guy Darrell himself came out from the copse, close by the gate, and opening it quickly, stood face with his abhorrent son-in-law. Jasper was startled, but the opportunity was not to be lost. "Mr. Darrell," he said, "I come here again to see you; vouchsafe me, this time, a calmer hearing." So changed was Losely, so absorbed in his own emotions Darrell, that the words did not at once waken up remembrance. "Another time," said Darrell, hastily moved on into the road; "I am not at leisure now."

"Pardon me, *now*," said Losely, unconsciously bringing himself back to the tones and bearing of his earlier and more civilized years. "You do not remember me, sir; no wonder. But my name is Jasper Losely."

Darrell halted; then, still as if spellbound, looked fixedly at the broad-shouldered, burly frame before him, cased in its coarse pea-jacket, and in that rude form, and that defeatured, bloated face, detected, though with strong effort, the wrecks of the masculine beauty which had ensnared his deceitful daughter. Jasper could not have selected a more unpropitious moment for his cause. Darrell was still to much under the influence of recent excitement and immense sorrow for that supremacy of prudence over passion which could alone have made him a willing listener to overtures from Jasper Losely. And about the man whose connection with himself was a thought of such bitter shame, there was now so unmistakably the air of settled degradation, that all Darrell's instincts of gentleman were revolted—just at the very time, too, when his pride had been most chafed and assailed by the obtrusion of all that rendered most galling to him the very name of Jasper Losely. What! was it that man's asserted child whom Lionel

Haughton desired as a wife?—was the alliance with that man to be thus renewed and strengthened?—that man have another claim to him and his in right of parentage to the bride of his nearest kinsman? What! was it that man's child whom he was asked to recognize as of his own flesh and blood!—the last representative of his line? That man!—*that!* A flash shot from his bright eye, deepening its grey into dark; and, turning on his heel, Darrell said, through his compressed lips—

"You have heard, sir, I believe, through Colonel Morley, that only on condition of your permanent settlement in one of our distant colonies, or America if your prefer it, would I consent to assist you. I am of the same mind still. I cannot parley with you myself. Colonel Morley is abroad, I believe. I refer you to my solicitor; you have seen him years ago; you know his address. No more, sir."

"This will not do, Mr. Darrell," said Losely doggedly; and, planting himself right before Darrell's way, "I have come here on purpose to have all differences out with you, face to face—and I will——"

"You will!" said Darrell, pale with haughty anger, and with the impulse of his passion, his hand clenched. In the bravery of his nature, and the warmth of a temper constitutionally quick, he thought nothing of the strength and bulk of the insolent obtruder—nothing of the peril of odds so unequal in a personal encounter. But the dignity which pervaded all his habits, and often supplied to him the place of discretion, came, happily for himself, to his aid now. *He* strike a man whom he so despised!—he raise that man to his own level by the honor of a blow from his hand! Impossible! "You will!" he said. "Well, be it so. Are you come again to tell me that a child of my daughter lives, and that you won my daughter's fortune by a deliberate lie!"

"I am not come to speak of that girl, but of myself. I say that I have a claim on you, Mr. Darrell; I say that, turn and twist the truth as you will, you are still my father-in-law, and that it is intolerable that I should be wanting bread, or driven into actual robbery, while my wife's father is a man of countless wealth, and has no heir except—but I will not now urge that child's cause; I am content to abandon it if so obnoxious to you. Do you wish me to cut a throat, and to be hanged, and all the world to hear the last dying speech and confession of Guy Darrell's son-in-law? Answer me, sir?"

"I answer you briefly and plainly. It is simply because I would not have that last disgrace on Guy Darrell's name that I offer you a subsistence in lands where you will be less exposed to those temptations which induced you to invest the sums, that, by your own tale, had been obtained from me on false pretences, in the sink of a Paris gambling-house. A subsistence that, if it does not pamper vice, at least places you beyond the necessity of crime, is at your option. Choose it or reject it as you will."

"Look you, Mr. Darrell," said Jasper, whose temper was fast giving way beneath the cold and galling scorn with which he was thus cast aside, "I am in a state so desperate, that, rather than strave, I may take what you so contemptuously fling to—your daughter's husband; but—"

"Knave!" cried Darrell, interrupting him, "do you again and again urge it as a claim upon me, that you decoyed from her home, under a false name, my only child; that she died in a foreign land—broken-hearted, if I have rightly heard: is that a claim upon your duped victim's father?"

"It seems so, since your pride is compelled to own that the world would deem it one, if the jail chaplain took down the last words of your son-in-law! But, *basta*, *basta!* hear me out, and spare hard names; for the blood is mounting into my brain, and I may become dangerous. Had any other man eyed, and scoffed, and railed at me as you have done, he would be lying dead and dumb as this stone at my foot; but you—are my father-in-law! Now, I care not to bargain with you what be the precise amount of my stipend if I obey your wish, and settle miserably in one of those raw, comfortless corners into which they who burthen this Old World are thrust out of sight. I would rather live my time out in this country—live it out in peace and for half what you may agree to give in transporting me. If you are to do anything for me, you had better do it so as to make me contented on easy terms to your own pockets, rather than to leave me dissatisfied, and willing to annoy you, which I could do

somehow or other, even on the far side of the Herring Pond. I might keep to the letter of a bargain, live in Melbourne or Sydney, and take your money, and yet molest and trouble you by deputy. That girl, for instance—your grandchild; well, well, disown her if you please; but if I find out where she is, which I own I have not done yet, I might contrive to render her the plague of your life, even though I were in Australia,"

"Ay," said Darrell, murmuring—"ay, ay; but"—(suddenly gathering himself up)—"No! Man, if she were my grandchild, your own child, could you talk of her thus?—make her the object of so base a traffic, and such miserable threats? Wicked though you be, this were against nature!—even in nature's wickedness—even in the son of a felon, and in the sharper of a hell. Pooh! I despise your malice. I will listen to you no longer. Out of my path."

"No!"

"No?"

"No, Guy Darrell, I have not yet done; you shall hear my terms, and accept them—a moderate sum down; say a few hundreds, and two hundred a-year to spend in London as I will—but out of your beat, out of your sight and hearing. Grant this, and I will never cross you again—never attempt to find, and, if I find by chance, never claim as my child by your daughter that wandering girl. I will never shame you by naming our connection. I will not offend the law, nor die by the hangman; yet I shall not live long, for I suffer much, and I drink hard."

The last words were spoken gloomily, not altogether without a strange dreary pathos. And amidst all his just scorn and anger, the large human heart of Guy Darrell was for the moment touched. He was silent—his mind hesitated; would it not be well—would it not be just as safe to his own peace, and to that of the poor child, whom, no matter what her parentage, Darrell could not but desire to free from the claim set up by so bold a ruffian, to gratify Losely's wish, and let him remain in England, upon an allowance that would suffice for his subsistence?

Unluckily for Jasper, it was while this doubt passed through Darrell's relenting mind, that the miscreant, who was shrewd enough to see that he had gained ground, but too coarse of apprehension to ascribe his advantage to its right cause, thought to strengthen his case by additional arguments. "You see, sir," resumed Jasper, in almost familiar accents, "that there is no dog so toothless but what he can bite, and no dog so savage but what, if you give him plenty to eat, he will serve you."

Darrell looked up, and his brow slowly darkened.

Jasper continued—"I have hinted how I might plague you; perhaps, on the other hand, I might do you a good turn with that handsome lady who drove from your park-gate as I came up. Ah! you were once to have been married to her. I read in the newspapers that she has become a widow; you may marry her yet. There was a story against you once; her mother made use of it, and broke off an old engagement. I can set that story right."

"You can," said Darrell, with that exceeding calmness which comes from exceeding wrath; "and perhaps, sir, that story, whatever it might be, you invented. No dog so toothless as not to bite—eh, sir?"

"Well," returned Jasper, mistaking Darrell's composure, "at that time certainly it seemed my interest that you should not marry again;—but *basta! basta!* enough of bygones. If I bit once, I will serve now. Come, sir, you are a man of the world, let us close the bargain."

All Darrell's soul was now up in arms. What, then! this infamous wretch was the author of the tale by which the woman he had loved, as woman was never loved before, had excused her breach of faith, and been lost to him for ever? And he learned this, while yet fresh from her presence—fresh from the agonizing conviction that his heart loved still, but could not pardon. With a spring so sudden that it took Losely utterly by surprise, he leaped on the bravo, swung aside that huge bulk which Jasper had boasted four draymen could not stir against its will, cleared his way; and turning back before Losely had recovered his amaze, cried out, "Execrable villain! I revoke every offer to aid a life that has existed but to darken and desolate those it was permitted to approach. Starve or rob! perish miserably! And if I pour not on your head my parting curse, it is only because I know that man has no right to curse; and casting

you back on your own evil self is the sole revenge which my belief in Heaven permits me.

Thus saying, Darrell strode on—swiftly, but not as one who flies. Jasper made three long bounds, and was almost at his side, when he was startled by the explosion of a gun. A pheasant fell dead on the road, and Darrell's gamekeeper, gun in hand, came through a gap in the hedge, opposite the park-pales, and seeing his master close before him, approached to apologize for the suddenness of the shot.

Whatever Losely's intention in hastening after Darrell, he had no option now but to relinquish it, and drop back. The village itself was not many hundred yards distant; and, after all, what good in violence, except the gratified rage of the moment? Violence would not give to Jasper Losely the income that had just been within his grasp, and had so unexpectedly eluded it. He remained, therefore, in the lane, standing still, and seeing Darrell turn quietly into his park through another gate close to the manor-house. The gamekeeper, meanwhile, picked up his bird, reloaded his gun, and eyed Jasper suspiciously askant. The baffled gladiator at length turned and walked slowly back to the town he had left. It was late in the afternoon when he once more gained his corner in the coffee-room of his commercial inn; and, to his annoyance, the room was crowded—it was market-day. Farmers, their business over, came in and out in quick succession; those who did not dine at the ordinaries, taking their hasty snack, or stirrup-cup, while their horses were being saddled; others to look at the newspaper, or exchange a word on the state of markets and the nation. Jasper, wearied and sullen, had to wait for the refreshments he ordered, and meanwhile fell into a sort of half doze, as was not now unusual in him in the intervals between food and mischief. From this creeping torpor he was suddenly roused by the sound of Darrell's name.

Three farmers standing close beside him, their backs to the fire, were tenants to Darrell—two of them on the lands that Darrell had purchased in the years of his territorial ambition; the third resided in the hamlet of Fawley, and rented the larger portion of the comparatively barren acres to which the old patrimonial estate was circumscribed. These farmers were talking of their Squire's return to to the county—of his sequestered mode of life—of his peculiar habits—of the great unfinished house which was left to rot. The Fawley tenant then said that it might not be left to rot after all, and that the village workmen had been lately employed, and still were, in getting some of the rooms into rough order; and then he spoke of the long gallery in which the Squire had been arranging his fine pictures, and how he had run up a passage between that gallery and his own room, and how he would spend hours at day, and night too, in that awful long room as lone as a church-yard; and that Mr. Mills had said that his master now lived almost entirely either in that gallery or in the room in the roof of the hold ouse—quite cut off, as you might say, except from the eyes of those dead pictures, or the rats, which had grown so excited at having their quarters in the new building invaded, that if you peeped in at the windows in moonlit nights you might see them in dozens, sitting on their haunches, as if holding council, or peering at the curious old things which lay beside the crates out of which they had been taken.

Then the rustic gossips went on to talk of the rent-day which was at hand—of the audit feast, which, according to immemorial custom, was given at the old manor-house on that same rent-day—supposed that Mr. Fairthorn would preside—that the Squire himself would not appear—made some incidental observations on their respective rents and wheat-crops—remarked that they should have a good moonlight for their ride back from the audit feast—cautioned each other, laughing, not to drink too much of Mr. Fairthorn's punch—and finally went their way, leaving on the mind of Jasper Losely—who, leaning his scheming head on his powerful hand, had appeared in dull sleep all the while—these two facts: 1st, That on the third day from that which was then declining, sums amounting to thousands would find their way into Fawley manor-house; and, 2dly, That a communication existed between the unfinished, uninhabitated building, and Darrell's own solitary chamber. As soon as he had fortified himself by food and drink, Jasper rose, paid for his refreshments, and walked forth. Noiseless and rapid, skirting the hedgerows by the lane that led to Fawley, and scarcely distinguishable under their shadow,

the human wild beast strided on in scent of its quarry.

It was night when Jasper once more reached the moss-grown pales round the demesnes of the old manor-house. In a few minutes he was standing under the black shadow of the buttresses to the unfinished pile. His object was not, then, to assault, but to reconnoitre. He prowled round the irregular walls, guided in his survey, now and then, faintly by the stars—more constantly and clearly by the lights from the contiguous manor-house—especially the light from that high chamber in the gable, close by which ran the thin framework of wood which linked the two buildings of stone, just as any frail scheme links together the Past which man has not enjoyed, with the Future he will not complete. Jasper came to a large bay unglazed window, its sill but a few feet from the ground, from which the boards, nailed across the mullions, had been removed by the workmen, whom Darrell had employed on the interior, and were replaced but by a loose tarpaulin. Pulling aside this slight obstacle, Jasper had no difficulty in entering through the wide mullions into the dreary edifice. Finding himself in profound darkness, he had recourse to a lucifer-box which he had about him, and the waste of a dozen matches sufficed him to examine the ground.

He was in a space intended by the architect for the principal staircase; a tall ladder, used by the recent workmen, was still left standing against the wall, the top of it resting on a landing-place opposite a door-way, that, from the richness of its half-finished architrave, obviously led to what had been designed for the state apartments; between the pediments was a slight temporary door of rough deal planks. Satisfied with his reconnoitre, Losely quitted the skeleton pile, and retraced his steps to the inn he had left. His musings by the way suggested to him the expediency, nay, the necessity of an accomplice. Implements might be needed—disguises would be required—swift horses for flight to be hired—and, should the robbery succeed, the bulk of the spoil would be no doubt in bank-notes, which it would need some other hand than his own to dispose of, either at the bank next morning at the earliest hour, or by transmission abroad. For help in all this Jasper knew no one to compare to Cutts; nor did he suspect his old ally of any share in the conspiracy against him, of which he had been warned by Mrs. Crane.

Resolving, therefore, to admit that long-tried friend into his confidence, and a share of the spoils, he quickened his pace, arrived at the railway station in time for a late train to London, and, disdainful of the dangers by which he was threatened in return to any of the haunts of his late associates, gained the dark court wherein he had effected a lodgment on the night of his return to London, and roused Cutts from his slumbers with tales of an enterprise so promising, that the small man began to recover his ancient admiration for the genius to which he had bowed at Paris, but which had fallen into his contempt in London.

Mr. Cutts held a very peculiar position in that section of the great world to which he belonged. He possessed the advantage of an education superior to that of the generality of his companions, having been originally a clerk to an Old Bailey attorney, and having since that early day accomplished his natural shrewdness by a variety of speculative enterprises both at home and abroad. In these adventures he had not only contrived to make money, but, what is very rare with the foes of law, to save it. Being a bachelor, he was at small expenses, but besides his bachelor's lodging in the dark court, he had an establishment in the heart of the City, near the Thames, which was intrusted to the care of a maiden sister, as covetous and as crafty as himself.

At this establishment, ostensibly a pawnbroker's, were received the goods which Cutts knew at his residence in the court were to be sold a bargain, having been obtained for nothing. It was chiefly by this business that the man had enriched himself. But his net was one that took in fishes of all kinds. He was a general adviser to the invaders of law. If he shared in the schemes he advised, they were so sure to be successful, that he enjoyed the highest reputation for luck. It was but seldom that he did actively share in those schemes—lucky in what he shunned as in what he performed. He had made no untruthful boast to Mrs. Crane of the skill with which he had kept himself out of the fangs of justice. With a

certain portion of the police he was indeed rather a favorite; for was anything mysteriously "lost," for which the owner would give a reward equal to its value in legal markets, Cutts was the man who would get it back. Of violence he had a wholesome dislike; not that he did not admire force in others—not that he was physically a coward—but that caution was his predominant characteristic. He employed force when required—set a just value on it—would plan a burglary, and dispose of the spoils; but it was only where the prize was great and the danger small, that he lent his hand to the work that his brain approved.

When Losely proposed to him the robbery of a lone country-house, in which Jasper, making light of all perils, brought prominently forward the images of some thousands of pounds in gold and notes, guarded by an elderly gentleman, and to be approached with ease through an uninhabited building—Cutts thought it well worth personal investigation. Nor did he consider himself bound, by his general engagement to Mrs. Crane, to lose the chance of a sum so immeasurably greater than he could expect to obtain from her by revealing the plot and taking measures to frustate it. Cutts was a most faithful and intelligent agent when he was properly paid, and had proved himself so to Mrs. Crane on various occasions. But then, to be paid *properly* meant a gain greater in serving than he could get in not serving. Hitherto it had been extremely lucrative to obey Mrs. Crane in saving Jasper from crime and danger. In this instance the lucre seemed all the other way. Accordingly, the next morning, having filled a saddle-bag with sundry necessaries, such as files, picklocks, masks—to which he added a choice selection of political tracts and newspapers—he and Jasper set out on two hired but strong and fleet hackneys to the neighborhood of Fawley. They put up at a town on the other side of the Manor-house from that by which Jasper had approached it, and at about the same distance.

After baiting their steeds, they proceeded to Fawley by the silent guide of a finger-post, gained the vicinity of the park, and Cutts, dismounting, flitted across the turf, and plunged himself into the hollows of the unfinished mansion, while Jasper took charge of the horses in a corner of the wooded lane. Cutts, pleased by the survey of the forlorn interior, ventured, in the stillness that reigned around, to mount the ladder, to apply a picklock to the door above, and opening this with ease, crept into the long gallery, its walls covered with pictures. Through the crevices in another door at the extreme end, gleamed a faint light. Cutts applied his eye to the chinks and key-hole, and saw that the light came from a room on the other side the narrow passage which connected the new house with the old. The door of that house was open, candles were on the table, and beside the table Cutts could distinguish the outline of a man's form seated—doubtless the owner; but the form did not seem "elderly." If inferior to Jasper in physical power, it still was that of vigorous and unbroken manhood. Cutts did not like the appearance of that form, and he retreated to outer air with some misgivings. However, on rejoining Losely, he said, "As yet things look promising—place still as death—only one door locked, and that, the common country lock, which a school-boy might pick with his knife."

"Or a crooked nail," said Jasper.

"Ay, no better picklock in good hands. But there are other things besides locks to think of."

Cutts then hurried on to suggest that it was just the hour when some of the workmen employed on the premises might be found in the Fawley public-house; that he should ride on, dismount there, and take his chance of picking up details of useful information as to localities and household. He should represent himself as a commercial traveller on his road to the town they had quitted; he should take out his cheap newspapers and tracts; he should talk politics—all workmen love politics, especially the politics of cheap newspapers and tracts. He would rejoin Losely in an hour or so.

The bravo waited—his horse grazed—the moon came forth, stealing through the trees, bringing into fantastic light the melancholy old dwelling-house—the yet more melancholy new pile. Jasper was not, as we have seen, without certain superstitious fancies, and they had grown on him more of late as his brain had become chronically heated and his nerves relaxed by pain. He began to

feel the awe of the silence and the moonlight; and some vague remembrances of earlier guiltless days—of a father's genial love—of joyous sensations in the priceless possession of youth and vigor—of the admiring smiles and cordial hands which his beauty, his daring, and high spirits had attracted towards him—of the all that he had been, mixed with the consciousness of what he was, and an uneasy conjecture of the probable depth of the final fall—came dimly over his thoughts, and seemed like the whispers of remorse. But it is rarely that man continues to lay blame on himself; and Jasper hastened to do, as many a better person does without a blush for his folly—viz. shift upon the innocent shoulders of fellow-men, or on the hazy outlines of that clouded form which ancient schools and modern plagiarists call sometimes "Circumstance," sometimes "Chance," sometimes "Fate," all the guilt due to his own wilful abuse of irrevocable hours.

With this consolatory creed, came of necessity—the devil's grand luxury, Revenge. Say to yourself, "For what I suffer I condemn another man, or I accuse the Arch-Invisible, be it a Destiny, be it a Maker!" and the logical sequel is to add evil to evil, folly to folly—to retort on the man who so wrongs, or on the Arch-Invisible who so afflicts you. Of all our passions, is not Revenge, the one into which enters with the most zest, a devil? For what is a devil?—A being whose sole work on earth is some revenge on God!

Jasper Losely was not by temperament vindicative; he was irascible, as the vain are—combative, aggressive, turbulent, by the impulse of animal spirits; but the pre-meditation of vengeance was foreign to a levity and egotism which abjured the self-sacrifice that is equally necessary to hatred as to love. But Guy Darrell had forced into his moral system a passion not native to it. Jasper had expected so much from his marriage with the great man's daughter—counted so thoroughly on her power to obtain pardon and confer wealth—and his disappointment had been so keen—been accompanied with such mortification—that he regarded the man whom he had most injured as the man who had most injured him. But not till now did his angry feelings assume the shape of a definite vengeance. So long as there was a chance that he could extort from Darrell the money that was the essential necessary to his life, he checked his thoughts whenever they suggested a profitless gratification of rage. But now that Darrell had so scornfully and so inexorably spurned all concession—now that nothing was to be wrung from him except by force—force and vengeance came together in his projects.

And yet, even in the daring outrage he was meditating, murder itself did not stand out as a thought accepted—no; what pleased his wild and turbid imagination was the idea of humiliating by terror the man who had humbled him by disdain. To penetrate into the home of this haughty scorner—to confront him in his own chamber at the dead of night, man to man, force to force; to say to him, "None now can deliver you from me—I come no more as a suppliant—I command you to accept my terms;" to gloat over the fears which, the strong man felt assured, would bow the rich man to beg for mercy at his feet;—this was the picture which Jasper Losely conjured up; and even the spoil to be won by violence smiled on him less than the grand position which the violence itself would bestow. Are not nine murders out of ten fashioned thus from conception into deed? "Oh that my enemy were but before me face to face—none to part us!" says the vindictive dreamer. Well, and what then? *There*, his imagination halts—there he drops the sable curtain; he goes not on to say, "Why, *then* another murder will be added to the long catalogue from Cain." He palters with his deadly wish, and mutters, perhaps, at most, "Why, *then*—come what may!"

Losely continued to gaze on the pale walls gleaming through the wintry boughs, as the moon rose high and higher. And now out broke the light from Darrell's lofty casement, and Losely smiled fiercely, and muttered—hark! the very words—"And *then!* come what may!"

Hoofs are now heard on the hard road, and Jasper is joined by his accomplice.

"Well!" said Jasper.

"Mount!" returned Cutts; "I have much to say as we ride."

"This will not do," resumed Cutts, as they sped fast down the lane; "why, you never told me all the drawbacks. There are no less than four men in the house—two servants besides the master and his secretary; and one of those

servants, the butler or valet, has firearms, and knows how to use them."

"Pshaw!" said Jasper, scoffingly; "is that all? Am I not a match for four?"

"No, it is not all; you told me the master of the house was a retired elderly man, and you mentioned his name. But you never told me that your Mr. Darrell was the famous lawyer and Parliament man—a man about whom the newspapers have been writing the last six months."

"What does that signify?"

"Signify! Just this, that there will be ten times more row about the affair you propose than there would be if it concerned only a stupid old country squire, and therefore ten times as much danger. Besides, on principle I don't like to have anything to do with lawyers—a cantankrous, spiteful set of fellows. And this Guy Darrell! Why, General Jas, I have seen the man. He cross-examined me once when I was a witness on a case of fraud, and turned me inside out with as much ease as if I had been an old pin-cushion stuffed with bran. I think I see his eye now, and I would as lief have a loaded pistol at my head as that eye again fixed on mine."

"Pooh! You have brought a mask; and, besides, *you* need not see him; I can face him alone."

"No, no; there might be murder! I never mix myself with things of that kind, on principle; your plan will not do. There might be a much safer chance of more *swag* in a very different sort of scheme. I hear that the pictures in that ghostly long room I crept through are worth a mint of money. Now, pictures of great value are well known, and there are collectors abroad who would pay almost any price for some pictures, and never ask where they came from; hide them for some years perhaps, and not bring them forth till any tales that would hurt us had died away. This would be safe, I say. If the pictures are small, no one in the old house need be disturbed. I can learn from some of the trade what pictures Darrell really has that would fetch a high price, and then look out for customers abroad. This will take a little time, but be worth waiting for."

"I will not wait," said Jasper fiercely; "and you are a coward. I have resolved that to-morrow night I will be in that man's room, and that man shall be on his knees before me."

Cutts turned sharply round on his saddle, and by aid of the moonlight surveyed Losely's countenance. "Oh, I see," he said, "there is more than robbery in your mind. You have some feeling of hate—of vengeance; the man has injured you?"

"He has treated me as if I were a dog," said Jasper; "and a dog *can* bite."

Cutts mused a few moments. "I have heard you talk at times about some rich relation or connection on whom you had claims; Darrell is the man, I suppose?"

"He is; and hark ye, Cutts, if you try to balk me here, I will wring your neck off. And since I have told you so much, I will tell you this much more—that I don't think there is the danger you count on; for I don't mean to take Darrell's blood, and I believe he would not take mine."

"But there may be a struggle—and then?"

"Ay, if so, and then—man to man," replied Jasper, mutteringly.

Nothing more was said, but both spurred on their horses to a quicker pace. The sparks flashed from the hoofs. Now through the moonlight, now under shade of the boughs, scoured on the riders—Losely's broad chest and marked countenance once beautiful, now fearful, formidably defined even under the shadows—his comrade's unsubstantial figure and goblin features flitting vague even under the moonlight.

The town they had left came in sight, and by this time Cutts had resolved on the course his prudence suggested to him. The discovery that, in the proposed enterprise, Losely had a personal feeling of revenge to satisfy had sufficed to decide the accomplice peremptorily to have nothing to do with the affair. It was his rule to abstain from all transactions in which fierce passions were engaged. And the quarrels between relations or connections were especially those which his experience of human nature told him brought risk upon all intermeddlers. But he saw that Jasper was desperate; that the rage of the bravo might be easily turned on himself; and therefore, since it was no use to argue, it would be discreet to dissimulate. Accordingly, when they reached their inn, and were seated over their brandy-and-water, Cutts re-

sumed the conversation, appeared gradually to yield to Jasper's reasonings, concerted with him the whole plan for the next night's operations, and took care meanwhile to pass the brandy. The day had scarcely broken before Cutts was off, with his bag of implements and tracts. He would have fain carried off also both the horses; but the ostler, surly at being knocked up at so early an hour, might not have surrendered the one ridden by Jasper, without Jasper's own order to do so. Cutts, however, bade the ostler be sure and tell the gentleman, before going away, that he, Cutts, strongly advised him "to have nothing to do with the bullocks."

Cutts, on arriving in London, went straight to Mrs. Crane's old lodging opposite to Jasper's. But she had now removed to Podden Place, and left no address. On reaching his own home, Cutts, however, found a note from her, stating that she should be at her old lodging that evening, if he would call at half-past nine o'clock; for, indeed, she had been expecting Jasper's promised visit—had learned that he had left his lodgings, and was naturally anxious to learn from Cutts what had become of him. When Cutts called at the appointed hour, and told his story, Arabella Crane immediately recognized all the danger which her informant had so prudently shunned. Nor was she comforted by Cutts's assurance that Jasper, on finding himself deserted, would have no option but to abandon, or at least postpone, an enterprise that, undertaken singly, would be too rash even for his reckless temerity. As it had become the object of her life to save Losely from justice, so she now shrunk from denouncing to justice his meditated crime; and the idea of recurring to Colonel Morley happily flashed upon her.

Having thus explained to the reader these antecedents in the narrative, we return to Jasper. He did not rise till late at noon; and as he was generally somewhat stupefied on rising, by the drink he had taken the night before, and by the congested brain which the heaviness of such sleep produced, he could not at first believe that Cutts had altogether abandoned the enterprise—rather thought that, with his habitual wariness, that Ulysses of the Profession had gone forth to collect farther information in the neighborhood of the proposed scene of action. He was not fully undeceived in this belief till somewhat late in the day, when strolling into the stable-yard, the ostler, concluding from the gentleman's goodly thews and size that he was a north-country grazier, delivered Cutt's allegorical caution against the bullocks.

Thus abandoned, Jasper's desperate project only acquired a still more concentrated purpose, and a ruder simplicity of action. His original idea, on first conceiving the plan of robbery, had been to enter into Darrell's presence disguised and masked. Even, however, before Cutts deserted him, the mere hope of plunder had become subordinate to the desire of a personal triumph; and now that Cutts had left him to himself, and carried away the means of disguise, Jasper felt rather pleased than otherwise at the thought that his design should have none of the characteristics of a vulgar burglary. No mask now; his front should be as open as his demand. Cutts's report of the facility of penetrating into Darrell's very room also lessened the uses of an accomplice. And in the remodification of his first hasty plan of commonplace midnight stealthy robbery, he would no longer even require an assistant to dispose of the plunder he might gain. Darrell should now yield to his exactions, as a garrison surprised accepts the terms of its conqueror. There would be no flight, no hiding, no fear of notes stopped at banks. He would march out, hand on haunch, with those immunities of booty that belong to the honors of war.

Pleasing his self-conceit with so gallant a view of his meditated exploit, Jasper sauntered at dark into the town, bought a few long narrow nails and a small hammer, and returning to his room, by the aid of the fire, the tongs, and the hammer, be fashioned these nails, with an ease and quickness which showed an expert practitioner, into instruments that would readily move the wards of any common country-made lock. He did not care for weapons. He trusted at need to his own powerful hands. It was no longer, too, the affair of a robber unknown, unguessed, who might have to fight his way out of an alarmed household. It was but the visit which he, Jasper Losely, Esquire, thought fit to pay, however unceremoniously and unseasonably, to the house of a father-in-law! At the worst, should he fail in finding Darrell, or securing an unwitnessed interview—should he, instead,

alarm the household, it would be a proof of the integrity of his intentions that he had no weapons save those which Nature bestows on the wild man as the mightiest of her wild beasts.

At night he mounted his horse, but went out of his way, keeping the high-road for an hour or two, in order to allow ample time for the farmers to have quitted the rentfeast, and the old Manor-house to be hushed in sleep. At last, when he judged the coast clear and the hour ripe, he wound back into the lane towards Fawley; and when the spire of its hamlet-church came in sight through the frosty starlit air, he dismounted—led the horse into one of the thick beech-woods that make the prevailing characteristic of the wild country round that sequestered dwelling-place—fastened the animal to a tree, and stalked towards the park-pales on foot. Lightly, as a wolf enters a sheep-fold, he swung himself over the moss-grown fence; he gained the buttresses of the great raw pile; high and clear above, from Darrell's chamber, streamed the light; all the rest of the old house was closed and dark, buried no doubt in slumber.

He is now in the hollows of the skeleton pile; he mounts the ladder; the lock of the door before him yields to his rude implements but artful hand. He is in the long gallery; the moonlight comes broad and clear through the large casements. What wealth of art is on the walls! but how profitless to the robber's greed! There, through the very halls which the master had built in the day of his ambition, saying to himself, "These are for far posterity," the step of Violence, it may be of Murder, takes it stealthy way to the room of the childless man! Through the uncompleted pile, towards the uncompleted life, strides the terrible step.

The last door yields noiselessly. The small wooden corridor, narrow as the drawbridge which in ancient fortresses was swung between the commandant's room in the topmost story and some opposing wall, is before him. And Darrell's own door is half open; lights on the table — logs burning bright on the hearth. Cautiously Losely looked through the aperture. Darrell was not there; the place was solitary; but the opposite door was open also. Losely's fine ear caught the sound of a slight movement of a footstep in the room just below, to which that opposite door admitted. In an instant the robber glided within the chamber—closed and locked the door by which he had entered, retaining the key about his person. The next stride brought him to the hearth. Beside it hung the bell-rope common in old-fashioned houses. Losely looked round; on the table, by the writing implements, lay a pen-knife. In another moment the rope was cut, high out of Darrell's reach, and flung aside. The hearth, being adapted but for log-wood fires, furnished not those implements in which, at a moment of need, the owner may find an available weapon—only a slight pair of brass wood-pincers, and a shovel equally frail. Such as they were, however, Jasper quietly removed and hid them behind a heavy old bureau. Steps were now heard mounting the stair that led into the chamber; Losely shrunk back into the recess beside the mantelpiece. Darrell entered, with a book in his hand, for which he had indeed quitted his chamber—a volume containing the last Act of Parliament relating to Public Trusts, which had been sent to him by his solicitor; for he is creating a deed of Trust, to insure to the nation the Darrell Antiquities, in the name of his father the antiquarian.

Darrell advanced to the writing-table, which stood in the centre of the room; laid down the book, and sighed—the short, quick impatient sigh which had become one of his peculiar habits. The robber stole from the recess, and, gliding round to the door by which Darrell had entered, while the back of the master was still towards him, set fast the lock, and appropriated the key as he had done at the door which had admitted himself. Though the noise in that operation was but slight, it roused Darrell from his abstracted thoughts. He turned quickly, and at the same moment Losely advanced towards him.

At once Darrell comprehended his danger. His rapid glance took in all the precautions by which the intruder proclaimed his lawless purpose—the closed door, the bell rope cut off. There, between those four secret walls, must pass the interview between himself and the desperado. He was unarmed, but he was not daunted. It was but man to man. Losely had for him his vast physical strength, his penury, despair, and vindicitive purpose. Darrell had in his favor the intellect which gives

presence of mind; the energy of nerve, which is no more to be seen in the sinew and bone than the fluid which fells can be seen in the jars and the wires; and that superb kind of pride, which, if terror be felt, makes its action impossible, because a disgrace, and bravery a matter of course, simply because it is honor.

As the bravo approached, by a calm and slight movement Darrell drew to the other side of the table, placing that obstacle between himself and Losely, and, extending his arm, said, "Hold, sir; I forbid you to advance another step. You are here, no matter how, to re-urge your claims on me. Be seated; I will listen to you."

Darrell's composure took Losely so by surprise, that mechanically he obeyed the command thus tranquilly laid upon him, and sunk into a chair—facing Darrell with a sinister under-look from his sullen brow. "Ah!" he said, "you will listen to me now; but my terms have risen."

Darrell, who had also seated himself, made no answer; but his face was resolute, and his eye watchful. The ruffian resumed, in a gruffer tone, "My terms have risen, Mr. Darrell."

"Have they, sir? and why?"

"Why! Because no one can come to your aid here; because here you cannot escape; because here you are in my power!"

"Rather, sir, I listen to you because here you are under my roof-tree; and it is you who are in my power!"

"Yours! Look round; the doors are locked on you. Perhaps you think your shouts, your cries, might bring aid to you. Attempt it—raise your voice—and I strangle you with these hands."

"If I do not raise my voice, it is, first, because I should be ashamed of myself if I required aid against one man; and, secondly, because I would not expose to my dependants a would-be assassin in him whom my lost child called husband. Hush, sir, hush, or your own voice will alarm those who sleep below. And now, what is it you ask? Be plain, sir, and be brief."

"Well, if you like to take matters cooly, I have no objection. These are my terms. You have received large sums this day; those sums are in your house, probably in that bureau; and your life is at my will."

"You ask the monies paid for rent to-day. True, they are in the house; but they are not in my apartments. They were received by another; they are kept by another. In vain, through the windings and passages of this old house, would you seek to find the room in which he stores them. In doing so you will pass by the door of a servant who sleeps so lightly, that the chances are that he will hear you; he is armed with a blunderbuss, and with pistols. You say to me, 'Your money or your life.' I say to you, in reply, 'Neither: attempt to seize the money, and your own life is lost.'"

"Miser! I don't believe that sums so large are not in your own keeping. And even if they are not, you shall show me where they are; you shall lead me through those windings and passages of which you so tenderly warn me, my hand on your throat. And if servants wake, or danger threaten me, it is you who shall save me, or die! Ha! you do not fear me—eh, Mr. Darrell?" And Losely rose.

"I do not fear you," replied Darrell, still seated. "I cannot conceive that you are here with no other design than a profitless murder. You are here, you say, to make terms; it will be time enough to see whose life is endangered when all your propositions have been stated. As yet you have only suggested a robbery, to which you ask me to assist you. Impossible! Grant even that you were able to murder me, you would be just as far off from your booty. And yet you say your terms have risen! To me they seem fallen to—nothing! Have you anything else to say?"

The calmness of Darrell, so supremely displayed in this irony, began to tell upon the ruffian—the magnetism of the great man's eye and voice, and steadfast courage, gradually gaining power over the wild, inferior animal. Trying to recover his constitutional audacity, Jasper said, with a tone of the old rollicking voice, "Well, Mr. Darrell, it is all one to me how I wring from you, in your own house, what you refused me when I was a suppliant on the road. Fair means are pleasanter than foul. I am a gentleman—the grandson of Sir Julian Losely, of Losely Hall; I am your son-in-law; and I am starving. This must not be; write me a check."

Darrell dipped his pen in the ink, and drew the paper towards him.

"Oho! you don't fear me, eh? This is not done from fear, mind—all out of pure love and compassion, my kind father-in-law. You will write me a check for five thousand pounds—come, I am moderate—your life is worth a precious deal more than that. Hand me the check—I will trust to your honor to give me no trouble in cashing it, and bid you good-night—my father-in-law."

As Losely ceased with a mocking laugh, Darrell sprung up quickly, threw open the small casement which was within his reach, and flung from it the paper on which he had been writing, and which he wrapt round the heavy armorial seal that lay on the table.

Losely bounded towards him. "What means that?—what have you done?"

"Saved your life and mine, Jasper Losely," said Darrell, solemnly, and catching the arm that was raised against him. "We are now upon equal terms."

"I understand," growled the tiger, as the slaver gathered to his lips—"you think by that paper to summon some one to your aid,"

"Not so—that paper is useless while I live. Look forth—the moonlight is on the roofs below—can you see where that paper has fallen? On the ledge of a parapet that your foot could not reach. It faces the window of a room in which one of my household sleeps; it will meet his eye in the morning when the shutters are unbarred; and on that paper are writ these words, 'If I am this night murdered, the murderer is Jasper Losely,' and the paper is signed by my name. Back, sir—would you doom yourself to the gibbet?"

Darrell released the dread arm he had arrested, and Losely stared at him, amazed, bewildered.

Darrell resumed; "And now I tell you plainly that I can accede to no terms put to me thus. I can sign my hand to no order that you may dictate, because that would be to sign myself a coward—and my name is Darrell!"

"Down on your knees, proud man—sign you shall, and on your knees! I care not now for gold—I care not now a rush for my life. I came here to humble the man who from first to last has so scornfully humbled me—And I will, I will! On your knees—on your knees!"

The robber flung himself forward; but Darrell, whose eye had never quitted the foe, was prepared for and eluded the rush. Losely, missing his object, lost his balance, struck against the edge of the table which partially interposed between himself and his prey, and was only saved from falling by the close neighborhood of the wall, on which he came with a shock that for the moment well-nigh stunned him. Meanwhile Darrell had gained the hearth, and snatched from it a large log half-burning. Jasper, recovering himself, dashed the long matted hair from his eyes, and, seeing undismayed the formidable weapon with which he was menaced, cowered for a second and deadlier spring.

"Stay, stay, stay, parricide and madman!" cried Darrell, his eye flashing brighter than the brand. "It is not my life I plead for—it is yours. Remember, if I fall by your hand, no hope and no refuge are left to you! In the name of my dead child, and under the eye of avenging Heaven, I strike down the fury that blinds you, and I scare back your soul from the abyss!"

So ineffably grand were the man's look and gesture—so full of sonorous terror the swell of his matchless all-conquering voice—that Losely, in his midmost rage, stood awed and spell-bound. His breast heaved, his eye fell, his frame collapsed, even his very tongue seemed to cleave to the parched roof of his mouth. Whether the effect so suddenly produced might have continued, or whether the startled miscreant might not have lashed himself into renewed wrath and inexpiable crime, passes out of conjecture. At that instant simultaneously were heard hurried footsteps in the corridor without, violent blows on the door, and voices exclaiming, "Open, open!—Darrell, Darrell!"—while the bell at the portals of the old house rang fast and shrill.

"Ho!—is it so?" growled Losely, recovering himself at those unwelcome sounds. "But do not think that I will be caught thus, like a rat in a trap. No—I will—"

"Hist!" interrupted Darrell, dropping the brand, and advancing quickly on the ruffian—"Hist!—let no one know that my daughter's husband came here with a felon's purpose. Sit down—down, I say; it is for my house's honor that you should be safe." And suddenly placing both hands on Losely's broad shoulder, he forced him into a seat.

During these few hurried words, the strokes at the door and the shouts without had been continued, and the door shook on its yielding hinges.

"The key—the key!" whispered Darrell.

But the bravo was stupefied by the suddenness with which his rage had been cowed, his design baffled, his position changed from the man dictating laws and threatening life, to the man protected by his intended victim. And he was so slow in even comprehending the meaning of Darrell's order, that Darrell had scarcely snatched the keys less from his hand than from the pouch to which he at last mechanically pointed, when the door was burst open, and Lionel Haughton, Alban Morley, and the Colonel's servant, were in the room. Not one of them, at the first glance, perceived the inmates of the chamber who were at the right of their entrance, by the angle of the wall and in shadow. But out came Darrell's calm voice—

"Alban! Lionel!—welcome always; but what brings you hither at such an hour, with such clamor? Armed too!"

The three men stood petrified. There sate, peaceably enough, a large dark form, its hands on its knees, its head bent down, so that the features were not distinguishable; and over the chair in which this bending figure was thus confusedly gathered up, leant Guy Darrell, with quiet ease—no trace of fear nor of past danger in his face, which, though very pale, was serene, with a slight smile on the firm lips.

"Well," muttered Alban Morley, slowly lowering his pistol—"well, I am surprised!—yes, for the first time in twenty years, I *am* surprised!"

"Surprised perhaps to find me at this hour still up, and with a person upon business—the door locked. However, mutual explanations later. Of course you stay here to-night. My business with this—this visitor is now over. Lionel, open that door—here is the key.—Sir"—(he touched Losely by the shoulder, and whispered in his ear "Rise and speak not,")—(aloud)—"Sir, I need not detain you longer. Allow me to show you the way out of this rambling old house."

Jasper rose like one half asleep, and, still bending his form and hiding his face, followed Darrell down the private stair, through the study, the library, into the hall, the Colonel's servant lighting the way; and Lionel and Morley, still too amazed for words, bringing up the rear. The servant drew the heavy bolts from the front door: and now the household had caught alarm. Mills first appeared with the blunderbuss, then the footman, then Fairthorn.

"Stand back, there!" cried Darrell, and he opened the door himself to Losely. "Sir," said he then, as they stood in the moonlight, "mark that I told you truly—you were in my power; and if the events of this night can lead you to acknowledge a watchful Providence, and recall with a shudder the crime from which you have been saved, why, then, I too, out of gratitude to Heaven, may think of means by which to free others from the peril of your despair."

Losely made no answer, but slunk off with a fast, furtive stride, hastening out of the moonlit sward into the gloom of the leafless trees.

CHAPTER II.

If the Lion ever wear the Fox's hide, still he wears it as the Lion.

When Darrell was alone with Lionel and Alban Morley, the calm with which he had before startled them vanished. He poured out his thanks with deep emotion. "Forgive me; not in the presence of a servant could I say, 'You have saved me from an unnatural strife, and my daughter's husband from a murderer's end.' But by what wonderous mercy did you learn my danger? Were you sent to my aid?"

Alban briefly explained. "You may judge," he said in conclusion, "how great was our anxiety, when, following the instructions of our guide, while our driver rang his alarum at the front portals, we made our entrance into yon ribs of stone, found the doors already opened, and feared we might be too late. But, meanwhile, the poor woman waits without in the carriage that brought us from the station. I must go and relieve her mind."

"And bring her hither," cried Darrell, "to receive my gratitude. Stay, Alban; while you leave me with her, you will speak aside to Mills; tell him that you heard there was an attempt to be made on the house, and

came to frustrate it, but that your fears were exaggerated; the man was more a half-insane mendicant than a robber. Be sure, at least, that his indentity with Losely be not surmised, and bid Mills treat the affair lightly. Public men are exposed, you know, to assaults from crackbrained enthusiasts; or stay—I once was a lawyer, and" (continued Darrell, whose irony had become so integral an attribute of his mind as to be proof against all trial) "there *are* men so out of their wits as to fancy a lawyer has ruined them! Lionel, tell poor Dick Fairthorn to come to me." When the musician entered, Darrell whispered to him, "Go back to your room—open your casement—step out on to the parapet—you will see something white; it is a scrap of paper wrapped round my old armorial seal. Bring it to me just as it is, Dick. That poor young Lionel, we must keep him here a day or two; mind, no prickles for him, Dick."

CHAPTER III.

Arabella Crane *versus* Guy Darrell; or, Woman *versus* Lawyer. In the Courts, Lawyer would win; but in a Private Parlor, foot to foot, and tongue to tongue, Lawyer has not a chance.

Arabella Crane entered the room; Darrell hesitated—the remembrances attached to her were so painful and repugnant. But did he not now owe to her, perhaps, his very life? He passed his hand rapidly over his brow, as if to sweep away all earlier recollections, and, advancing quickly, extended that hand to her. The stern woman shook her head, and rejected the proffered greeting.

"You owe me no thanks," she said, in her harsh, ungracious accents; "I sought to save not you, but him."

"How!" said Darrell, startled; "you feel no resentment against the man who injured and betrayed you?"

"What my feelings may be towards him are not for you to conjecture; man could not conjecture them; I am woman. What they once were I might blush for; what they are now, I could own without shame. But you, Mr. Darrell,—you, in the hour of my uttermost anguish, when all my future was laid desolate, and the world lay crushed at my feet—you—man, chivalrous man!—you had for me no human compassion—you thrust me in scorn from your doors—you saw in my woe nothing but my error—you sent me forth, stripped of reputation, branded by your contempt, to famine or to suicide. And you wonder that I feel less resentment against him who wronged me than against you, who, knowing me wronged, only disdained my grief. The answer is plain—the scorn of the man she only reverenced leaves to a woman no memory to mitigate its bitterness and gall. The wrongs inflicted by the man she loved may leave, what they have left to me, an undying sense of a past existence—radiant, joyous, hopeful; of a time when the earth seemed covered with blossoms, just ready to burst into bloom; when the skies through their haze took the rose-hues as the sun seemed about to rise. The memory that I once was happy, at least then, I owe to him who injured and betrayed me. To you, when happiness was lost to me for ever, what do I owe? Tell me."

Struck by her words, more by her impressive manner, though not recognizing the plea by which the defendant thus raised herself into the accuser, Darrell answered gently, "Pardon me; this is no moment to revive recollections of anger on my part; but reflect, I entreat you, and you will feel that I was not too harsh. In the same position any other man would not have been less severe."

"Any other man!" she exclaimed; "ay, possibly! but would the scorn of any other man so have crushed self-esteem? The injuries of the wicked do not sour us against the good; but the scoff of the good leaves us malignant against virtue itself. Any other man! Tut! Genius is bound to be indulgent. It should know human errors so well—has, with its large luminous forces, such errors itself when it deigns to be human, that, where others may scorn, genius should only pity." She paused a moment, and then slowly resumed.

"And pity was my due. Had you, or had any one lofty as yourself in reputed honor, but said to me, 'Thou hast sinned—thou must suffer; but sin itself needs compassion, and compassion forbids thee to despair,'—why, then, I might have been gentler to the things of earth, and less steeled against the influences of Heaven than I have been. That is all—no

matter how. Mr. Darrell, I would not part from you with angry and bitter sentiments. Colonel Morley tells me that you have not only let the man, whom we need not name, go free, but that you have guarded the secret of his designs. For this I thank you. I thank you, because, what is left of that blasted and deformed existence, I have taken into mine. And I would save that man from his own devices as I would save my soul from its own temptations. Are you large-hearted enough to comprehend me? Look in my face—you have seen his; all earthly love is erased and blotted out of both."

Guy Darrell bowed his head in respect that partook of awe.

"You, too," said the grim woman after a pause, and approaching him nearer—"*you*, too, have loved, I am told, and you, too, were forsaken."

He recoiled and shuddered.

"What is left to your heart of its ancient folly? I should like to know! I am curious to learn if there be a man who can feel as woman! Have you only resentment? have you only disdain? have you only vengeance? have you pity? or have you the jealous absorbing desire, surviving the affection from which it sprang, that still the life wrenched from you shall owe, despite itself, a melancholy allegiance to your own?"

Darrell impatintly waved his hand to forbid farther questions; and it needed all his sense of the service this woman had just rendered him, to repress his haughty displeasure at so close an approach to his torturing secrets.

Arabella's dark bright eyes rested on his knitted brow, for a moment, wistfully, musingly. Then she said,—"I see! man's inflexible pride—no pardon there! But own, at least, that you have suffered."

"Suffered!" groaned Darrell involuntarily, and pressing his hand to his heart

"You have! and you own it! Fellow-sufferer, I have no more anger against you. Neither should pity, but let each respect the other. A few words more,—this child!"

"Ay—ay—this child! *you* will be truthful. You will not seek to deceive me—you know that she—she—claimed by that assasin, reared by his convict father—*she* is no daughter of my line!"

"What! would it then be no joy to know that your line did not close with yourself—that your child might——"

"Cease, madam, cease—it matters not to a man nor to a race when it perish, so that it perish at last with honor. Who would have either himself or his lineage live on into a day when the escutcheon is blotted and the name disgraced? No; if that be Matilda's child, tell me, and I will bear, as man may do, the last calamity which the will of Heaven may inflict. If, as I have all reason to think, the tale be an imposture, speak and give me the sole comfort to which I would cling amidst the ruin of all other hopes."

"Verily," said Arabella, with a kind of musing wonder in the tone of her softened voice; "verily, has a man's heart the same throb and fibre as a woman's? Had I a child like that blue-eyed wanderer with the frail form needing protection, and the brave spirit that ennobles softness, what would be my pride! my bliss! Talk of shame—disgrace! Fie—fie—the more the evil of others darkened one so innocent, the more cause to love and shelter her. But *I*—am childless! Shall I tell you that the offence which lies heaviest on my conscience has been my cruelty to that girl? She was given an infant to my care. I saw in her the daughter of that false, false, mean, deceiving friend, who had taken my confidence, and bought, with her supposed heritage, the man sworn by all oaths to me. I saw in her, too, your descendant, your rightful heiress. I rejoiced in a revenge on your daughter and yourself. Think not *I* would have foisted her on your notice! No. I would have kept her without culture, without consciousness of a higher lot; and when I gave her up to her grandsire the convict, it was a triumph to think that Matilda's child would be an outcast. Terrible thought! but I was mad then. But that poor convict whom you, in your worldly arrogance, so loftily despise—*he* took to his breast what was flung away as a worthless weed. And if the flower keep the promise of the bud, never flower so fair bloomed from your vaunted stem! And yet you would bless me, if I said, 'Pass on, childless man; she is nothing to you!'"

"Madam, let us not argue. As you yourself justly imply, man's heart and woman's must each know throbs that never are, and never should be, familiar to the other. I

repeat my question, and again I implore your answer."

"I cannot answer for certain; and I am fearful of answering at all, lest on a point so important I should mislead you. Matilda's child? Jasper affirmed it to me. His father believed him—I believed him. I never had the shadow of a doubt till——"

"Till what? For Heaven's sake speak."

"Till about five years ago, or somewhat more, I saw a letter from Gabrielle Desmarets, and——"

"Ah! which made you suspect, as I do, that the child is Gabrielle Desmarets' daughter."

Arabella reared her crest as a serpent before it strikes. "Gabrielle's daughter! You think so. Her child that I sheltered! Her child for whom I have just pleaded to you! *Hers!*" She suddenly became silent. Evidently that idea had never before struck her; evidently it now shocked her; evidently something was passing through her mind which did not allow that idea to be dismissed. As Darrell was about to address her, she exclaimed abruptly, "No! say no more now. You may hear from me again should I learn what may decide at least this doubt one way or the other. Farewell, sir."

"Not yet. Permit me to remind you that you have saved the life of a man whose wealth is immense."

"Mr. Darrell, my wealth in relation to my wants is perhaps immense as yours, for I do not spend what I possess."

"But this unhappy outlaw, whom you would save from himself, can henceforth be to you but a burthen and a charge. After what has passed to-night, I do tremble to think that penury may whisper other houses to rob, other lives to menace. Let me, then, place at your disposal, to be employed in such mode as you deem the best, a sum that may suffice to secure an object which we have in common."

"No, Mr. Darrell," said Arabella, fiercely; "whatever he be, never with my consent shall Jasper Losely be beholden to you for alms. If money can save him from shame and a dreadful death, that money shall be mine. I have said it. And, hark you, Mr. Darrell, what is repentance without atonement? I say not that I repent; but I do know that I seek to atone."

The iron-gray robe fluttered an instant, and then vanished from the room.

When Alban Morley returned to the library, he saw Darrell at the farther corner of the room, on his knees. Well might Guy Darrell thank Heaven for the mercies vouchsafed to him that night. Life preserved? Is *that* all? Might life yet be bettered and gladdened? Was there aught in the grim woman's words that might bequeath thoughts which reflection would ripen into influence over action?—aught that might suggest the cases in which, not ignobly, Pity might subjugate Scorn? In the royal abode of that soul, does Pride *only* fortify Honor?—is it but the mild king, not the imperial despot? Would it blind, as its rival, the Reason? Would it chain, as a rebel, the heart? Would it man the dominions, that might be serene, by the treasures it wastes—by the wars it provokes? Self-knowledge! self-knowledge! From Heaven, indeed, descends the precept—"KNOW THYSELF." That truth was told to us by the old heathen oracle. But what old heathen oracle has told us *how* to know?

CHAPTER IV.

The Man-eater humiliated. He encounters an old acquaintance in a traveller, who, like Shakespeare's Jaques, is "a melancholy fellow;" who also, like Jaques, hath "great reason to be sad;" and who, still like Jaques, is "full of matter."

JASPER LOSELY rode slowly on through the clear frosty night; not back to the country town which he had left on his hateful errand, nor into the broad road to London. With a strange desire to avoid the haunts of men, he selected—at each choice of way in the many paths branching right and left, between waste and woodland—the lane that seemed the narrowest and the dimmest. It was not remorse that gnawed him, neither was it mere mercenary disappointment, nor even the pang of baffled vengeance—it was the profound humiliation of diseased self-love—the conviction that, with all his brute power, he had been powerless in the very time and scene in which he had pictured to himself so complete a triumph. Even the quiet with which he had escaped was a mortifying recollection. Capture

itself would have been preferable, if capture had been preceded by brawl and strife—the exhibition of his hardihood and prowess.

Gloomily bending over his horse's neck, he cursed himself as fool and coward. What would he have had !—a new crime on his soul? Perhaps he would have answered—"Anything rather than this humiliating failure." He did not rack his brains with conjecturing if Cutts had betrayed him, or by what other mode assistance had been sent in such time of need to Darrell. Nor did he feel that hunger for vengeance, whether on Darrell or on his accomplice (should that accomplice have played the traitor), which might have been expected from his characteristic ferocity. On the contrary, the thought of violence and its excitements had in it a sickness as of shame. Darrell at that hour might have ridden by him scathless. Cutts might have jeered and said,—'I blabbed your secret, and sent the aid that foiled it;" and Losely would have continued to hang his head, nor lifted the herculean hand that lay nerveless on the horse's mane. Is it not commonly so in all reaction from excitements in which self-love has been keenly galled? Does not vanity enter into the lust of crime as into the desire of fame?

At sunrise Losely found himself on the high-road into which a labyrinth of lanes had led him, and opposite to a milestone, by which he learned that he had been long turning his back on the metropolis, and that he was about ten miles distant from the provincial city of Ouzelford. By this time his horse was knocked up, and his own chronic pains began to make themselves acutely felt; so that, when, a little farther on, he came to a wayside inn, he was glad to halt; and after a strong dram, which had the effect of an opiate, he betook himself to bed, and slept till the noon was far advanced.

When Losely came down stairs, the common room of the inn was occupied by a meeting of the trustees of the high-roads; and, on demanding breakfast, he was shown into a small sanded parlor adjoining the kitchen. Two other occupants—a man and a woman—were there already, seated at a table by the fire-side, over a pint of half-and half. Losely, warming himself at the hearth, scarcely noticed these humble revellers by a glance. And they, after a displeased stare at the stalwart frame which obscured the cheering glow they had hitherto monopolized, resumed a muttered conversation; of which, as well as of the *vile modicum* that refreshed their lips, the man took the lion's share.

Shabbily forlorn were that man's habiliments—turned, and returned, patched, darned, weather-stained, grease-stained—but still retaining that kind of mouldy, grandiose, bastard gentility, which implies that the wearer has known better days; and, in the downward progress of fortunes when they once fall, may probably know still worse. The woman was some years older than her companion, and still more forlornly shabby. Her garments seemed literally composed of particles of dust glued together, while her face might have insured her condemnation as a witch before any honest jury in the reign of King James the First. His breakfast, and the brandy-bottle that flanked the loaf, were now placed before Losely; and, as distastefully he forced himself to eat, his eye once more glanced towards, and this time rested on, the shabby man, in the sort of interest with which one knave out of elbows regards another.

As Jasper thus looked, gradually there stole on him a reminiscence of those coarse large features—that rusty disreputable wig. The recognition, however, was not mutual; and presently, after a whisper interchanged between the man and the woman, the latter rose, and approaching Losely, dropped a curtsy, and said, in a weird, under voice—"Stranger! luck's in store for you. Tell your fortune!" As she spoke, from some dust-hole in her garments she produced a pack of cards, on whose half-obliterated faces seemed encrusted the dirt of ages. Thrusting these antiquities under Jasper's nose, she added, "Wish and cut."

"Pshaw," said Jasper, who, though sufficiently superstitious in some matters and in regard to some persons, was not so completely under the influence of that imaginative infirmity as to take the creature before him for a sibyl. "Get away; you turn my stomach. Your cards smell; so do you!"

"Forgive her, worthy sir," said the man, leaning forward. "The hag may be unsavory, but she is wise. The Three Sisters who accosted the Scottish Thane, sir (Macbeth—you have seen it on the stage?) were not savoury. Withered, and wild in their at-

tire, sir, but they knew a thing or two! She sees luck in your face. Cross her hand and give it vent!"

"Fiddledee," said the irreverent Losely. "Take her off, or I shall scald her," and he seized the kettle.

The hag retreated grumbling; and Losely, soon despatching his meal, placed his feet on the hobs, and began to meditate what course to adopt for a temporary subsistence. He had broken into the last pound left of the money which he had extracted from Mrs. Crane's purse some days before. He recoiled with terror from the thought of returning to town and placing himself at her mercy. Yet what option had he? While thus musing, he turned impatiently round and saw that the shabby man and the dusty hag were engaged in an amicable game of *ecarté*, with those very cards which had so offended his olfactory organs. At that sight the old instinct of the gambler struggled back; and, raising himself up, he looked over the cards of the players. The miserable wretches were, of course, playing for nothing; and Losely saw at a glance that the man was, nevertheless, trying to cheat the woman! Positively he took that man into more respect; and that man, noticing the interest with which Losely surveyed the game, looked up, and said, "While the time, sir? What say you? A game or two? I can stake my pistoles—that is; sir, so far as a fourpenny bit goes. If ignorant of this French game, sir, cribbage or all fours?"

"No," said Losely, mournfully; "there is nothing to be got out of you; otherwise"—he stopped and sighed. "But I have seen you under other circumstances. What has become of your Theatrical Exhibition? Gambled it away. Yet, from what I see of your play, I think you ought not to have lost, Mr. Rugge."

The ex-manager started.

"What! You knew me before the Storm?—before the lightning struck me, as I may say, sir—and falling into difficulties, I became—a wreck? You knew me?—not of the Company?—a spectator?"

"As you say—a spectator. You had once in your employ an actor—clever old fellow. Waife, I think, he was called."

"Ha! hold! At that name, sir, my wounds bleed afresh. From that execrable name, sir, there hangs a tale!"

"Indeed! Then it will be a relief to you to tell it," said Losely, resettling his feet on the hob, and snatching at any diversion from his own reflections."

"Sir, when a gentleman, who is a gentleman, asks as a favor, a specimen of my powers of recital, not professionally, and has before him the sparkling goblet, which he does not invite me to share, he insults my fallen fortunes. Sir, I am poor—I own it; I have fallen into the sere and yellow leaf, sir; but I have still in this withered bosom the heart of a Briton!"

"Warm it, Mr. Rugge. Help yourself to the brandy—and the lady too."

"Sir, you are a gentleman; sir, your health. Hag, drink better days to us both. That woman, sir, *is* a hag, but she is an honor to her sex—faithful!"

"It is astonishing how faithful ladies are when not what is called beautiful. I speak from painful experience," said Losely, growing debonnair as the liquor relaxed his gloom, and regaining that levity of tongue which sometimes strayed into wit, and which—springing originally from animal spirits and redundant health—still came to him mechanically whenever roused by companionship from alternate intervals of lethargy and pain. "But now, Mr. Rugge, I am all ears; perhaps you will be kind enough to be all tale."

With tragic aspect, unrelaxed by that *jeu de mots*, and stilll wholly unrecognizing in the massive form and discolored swollen countenance of the rough-clad stranger, the elegant proportions, the healthful, blooming, showy face, and eloborate fopperies of the Jasper Losely who had sold to him a Phenomenon which proved so evanishing, Rugge entered into a prolix history of his wrongs at the hands of Waife, of Losely, of Sophy.

Only of Mrs. Crane did he speak with respect; and Jasper then for the first time learned—and rather with anger for the interference than gratitude for the generosity—that she had repaid the £100, and thereby cancelled Rugge's claim upon the child. The ex-manager then proceeded to the narrative of his subsequent misfortunes—all of which he laid to the charge of Waife and the Phenomenon. "Sir" said he, "I was ambitious. From my childhood's hour I dreamed of the great York Theatre—dreamed of it literally

thrice. Fatal Vision ! But like other dreams, that dream would have faded—been forgotten in the work-day world—and I should not have fallen into the sere and yellow, but have had, as formerly, troops of friends, and not been reduced to the horrors of poverty and a faithful Hag. But, sir, when I first took to my bosom that fiend, William Waife, he exhibited a genius, sir, that Dowton (you have seen Dowton?—grand) was a stick as compared with. Then my ambition, sir, blazed and flared up—obstreperous, and my childhood's dream haunted me; and I went about musing [Hag, you recollect !]—and muttering 'The Royal Theatre at York.' But, incredible though it seem, the ungrateful scorpion left me with a treacherous design to exhibit the parts I had fostered on the London boards; and even-handed Justice, sir, returned the poisoned chalice to his lips, causing him to lose an eye and to hobble—besides splitting up his voice—which served him right.

And again I took the scorpion for the sake of the Phenomenon. I had a babe myself once, sir, though you may not think it. Gormerick (that is this faithful Hag) gave the babe Daffy's Elixir, in teething; but it died—convulsions. I comforted myself when that Phenomenon came out on my stage—in pink satin and pearls. 'Ha,' I said, 'the great York Theatre shall yet be mine !' The haunting idea became a Mania, sir. The learned say that there is a Mania called Money Mania* —when one can think but of the one thing needful—as the guilty Thane saw the dagger, sir—you understand. And when the Phenomenon had vanished and gone, as I was told, to America, where I now wish I was myself, acting Rolla at New York or elsewhere, to a free and enlightened people — then, sir, the Mania grew on me still stronger and stronger. There was a pride in it, sir, a British pride. I said to this faithful Hag—'What—shall I not have the York because that false child has deserted me? Am I not able to realize a Briton's ambition without being beholden to a Phenomenon in spangles?' Sir, I took the York ! Alone I did it ! "

"And," said Losely, feeling a sort of dreary satisfaction in listening to the grotesque sorrows of one whose condition seemed to him yet more abject than his own—"And the York Theatre alone perhaps did you."

"Right, sir," said Rugge—half-dolorously, half-exultingly. "It was a Grand Concern, and might have done for the Bank of England ! It swallowed up my capital with as much ease, sir, as I could swallow an oyster if there were one upon that plate ! I saw how it would be, the very first week—when I came out myself, strong—Kean's own part in the *Iron Chest*—Mortimer, sir; there warn't three pounds ten in the house—packed audience, sir, and they had the face to hiss me. 'Hag,' said I to Mrs. Gormerick, 'this Theatre is a howling wilderness.' But there is a fascination in a Grand Concern, of which one is the head—one goes on and on. All the savings of a life devoted to the British Drama and the productions of native genius went in what I may call —a jiffey ! But it was no common object, sir, to your sight displayed—but what with pleasure, sir (I appeal to the Hag !) Heaven itself surveyed !—a great man struggling, sir, with the storms of fate, and greatly fallen, sir, with —a sensation ! York remembers it to this day ! I took the benefit of the Act—it was the only benefit I did take—and nobody was the better for it. But I don't repine—I realized my dream: that is more than all can say.

Since then I have had many downs, and no ups. I have been a messenger, sir—a prompter, sir, in my own Exhibition, to which my own clown, having married into the tragic line, succeeded, sir, as proprietor; buying of me, when I took the York, the theatre, scenery, and properties, sir, with the right still to call himself 'Rugge's Grand Theatrical Exhibition,' for an old song, sir — Melancholy. Tyrannized over, sir—snubbed and bullied by a creature dressed in a little brief authority; and my own tights—scarlet—as worn by me in my own applauded part of 'The Remorseless Baron.' At last, with this one faithful creature, I resolved to burst the chains—to be free as air—in short, sir, a chartered libertine, sir. We have not much, but thank the immortal gods, we *are* independent, sir—the Hag and I —chartered libertines ! And we are alive still—at which, in strict confidence, I may own to you that I am astonished."

"Yes ! you do live," said Jasper, much interested—for how to live at all was at that

* *Query*—Monomania.

moment a matter of considerable doubt to himself; "you do live—it *is* amazing! How?"

"The Faithful tells fortunes, and sometimes we pick up windfalls—widows and elderly single ladies—but it is dangerous. Labor is sweet, sir; but not hard labor in the dungeons of a Bridewell. She has known that labor, sir; and in those intervals I missed her much. Don't cry, Hag; I repeat, I live!"

"I understand now; you live upon her! They are the best of creatures, these hags, as you call them, certainly. Well, well, no saying what a man may come to! I suppose you have never seen Waife, nor that fellow you say was so well-dressed and good-looking, and who sold you the Phenomenon, nor the Phenomenon herself—Eh?" added Losely, stretching himself, and yawning, as he saw the brandy-bottle was finished.

"I have seen Waife—the one-eyed monster! Ah!—I have seen him!—and yesterday too; and a great comfort it was to me too!"

"You saw Waife yesterday—where?"

"At Ouzelford, which I and the Faithful left this morning."

"And what was he doing?" said Losely, with well-simulated indifference. "Begging, breaking stones, or what?"

"No," said Rugge, dejectedly; "I can't say it was what, in farcical composition, I should call such nuts to me as that, sir. Still, he was in a low way—seemed a pedlar or hawker, selling out of a pannier on the Rialto—I mean the Cornmarket, sir—not even a hag by his side, only a great dog—French. A British dog would have scorned such fellowship. And he did not look merry, as he used to do when in my troop. Did he, Hag?"

"His conscience smites him," said the Hag, solemnly.

"Did you speak to him?"

"Why, no. I should have liked it, but we could not at that moment, seeing that we were not in our usual state of independence. This faithful creature was being led before the magistrates, and I too—charge of cheating a cook maid, to whom the Hag had only said, 'that if the cards spoke true, she would ride in her carriage.' The charge broke down; but we were placed for the night in the Cells of the Inquisition, remanded, and this morning banished from the city, and are now on our way to—any other city;—eh, Hag?"

"And the old man was not with the Phenomenon? What has become of her then?"

"Perhaps she may be with him at his house, if he has one; only, she was not with him on the Rialto or Cornmarket. She was with him two years ago, I know; and he and she were better off then he is now, I suspect. And that is why it did me good, sir, to see him a pedlar—a common pedlar—fallen into the sere, like the man he abandoned!"

"Humph—where were they two years ago?"

"At a village not far from Humberston. He had a pretty house, sir, and sold baskets; and the girl was there too, favored by a great lady—a Marchioness, sir! Gods!"

"Marchioness?—near Humberston? The Marchioness of Montfort, I suppose?"

"Likely enough; I don't remember. All I know is, that two years ago my old Clown was my tyrannical manager; and being in that capacity, and this world being made for Cæsar, which is a shame, sir, he said to me, with a sneer, 'Old Gentleman Waife, whom you used to bully, and his Juliet Araminta, are in clover!' And the mocking varlet went on to unfold a tale to the effect, that when he had last visited Humberston, in the race-week, a young tradesman, who was courting the Columbine, whose young idea I myself taught to shoot on the light fantastic toe, treated that Columbine, and one of her sister train (being, indeed, her aunt, who has since come out at the Surrey in *Desdemona*) to a picnic in a fine park. (That's discipline!—ha, ha!) And there, sir, Columbine and her aunt saw Waife on the other side of a stream by which they sate carousing."

"The Clown perhaps said it to spite you."

"Columbine herself confirmed his tale, and said that, on returning to the Village Inn for the Triumphal Car (or bus) which brought them, she asked if a Mr. Waife dwelt thereabouts, and was told, 'Yes, with his granddaughter.' And she went on asking, till all came out as the Clown reported. And Columbine had not even the gratitude, the justice, to expose that villian—not even to say he had been my my perfidious servant! She had the face to tell me 'she thought it might harm him, and he was a kind old soul.' Sir, a Columbine whose toes I had rapped scores of times before they could be turned out, was below contempt! but when my own Clown

thus triumphed over me, in parading before my vision the bloated prosperity of mine enemy, it went to my heart like a knife; and we had words on it, sir, and—I left him to his fate. But a pedlar! Gentleman Waife has come to that! The heavens are just, sir, and of our pleasant vices, sir, make instruments that—that—"

"Scourge us," prompted the Hag, severely.

Losely rang the bell; the maid-servant appeared. "My horse and bill. Well, Mr. Rugge, I must quit your agreeable society. I am not overflowing with wealth at this moment or I would request your acceptance of—"

"The smallest trifle," interrupted the Hag, with her habitual solemnity of aspect.

Losely, who, in his small way, had all the liberality of a Catiline, "*alieni appetens, sui profusus*," drew forth the few silver coins yet remaining to him; and though he must have calculated that, after paying his bill, there could scarcely be three shillings left, he chucked two of them towards the Hag, who, clutching them with a profound curtsy, then handed them to the fallen monarch by her side, with a loyal tear and a quick sob that might have touched the most cynical republican.

In a few minutes more, Losely was again on horseback; and as he rode towards Ouzelford, Rugge and his dusty Faithful shambled on in the opposite direction—shambled on, foot-sore and limping, along the wide, waste, wintry thoroughfare—vanishing from the eye, as their fates henceforth from this story. There they go by the white hard milestone; farther on, by the trunk of the hedgerow-tree, which lies lopped and leafless—cumbering the wayside, till the time come to cast it off to the thronged, dull stack-yard: farther yet, where the ditch widens into yon stagnant pool, with the great dung-heap by its side. There the road turns aslant; the dung-heap hides them. Gone! and not a speck on the Immemorial, Universal Thoroughfare.

CHAPTER V.

No wind so cutting as that which sets in the quarter from which the sun rises.

THE town to which I lend the disguising name of Ouzelford, which, in years bygone, was represented by Guy Darrell, and which, in years to come, may preserve in its municipal hall his effigies in canvas or stone, is one of the handsomest in England. As you approach its suburbs from the London Road, it rises clear and wide upon your eye, crowning the elevated table-land upon which it is built;—a noble range of prospect on either side, rich with hedgerows not yet sacrificed to the stern demands of modern agriculture—venerable woodlands, and the green pastures round many a rural thane's frank, hospitable hall;—no one Great House banishing from leagues of landscape the abodes of knight and squire, nor menacing, with 'the legitimate influence of property,' the votes of rebellious burghers. Everywhere, like finger-posts to heaven, you may perceive the church-towers of rural hamlets embosomed in pleasant valleys, or climbing up gentle slopes. At the horizon, the blue fantastic outline of girdling hills mingles with the clouds.

A famous old cathedral, neighbored by the romantic ivy-grown walls of a ruined castle, soars up from the centre of the town, and dominates the whole survey—calm, as with conscious power. Nearing the town, the villas of merchants and traders, released perhaps from business, skirt the road, with trim gardens and shaven lawns. Now the small river, or rather rivulet, of Ouzel, from which the town takes its name, steals out from deep banks covered with brushwood or aged trees, and, widening into brief importance, glides under the arches of an ancient bridge; runs on, clear and shallow, to refresh low fertile dairy-meadows, dotted with kine; and finally quits the view, as brake and copse close round its narrowing, winding way; and that which, under the city bridge, was an imposing noiseless stream, becomes, amidst rustic solitudes, an insignificant babbling brook.

From one of the largest villas in these charming suburbs came forth a gentleman, middle-aged, and of a very mild and prepossessing countenance. A young lady without a bonnet, but a kerchief thrown over her sleek dark hair, accompanied him to the garden-gate, twining both hands affectionately round his arm, and entreating him not to stand in thorough draughts and catch cold, nor to step into puddles and wet his feet, and to be sure to be back before dark, as there were such shocking accounts in the newspapers of per-

sons robbed and garotted even in the most populous highways; and, above all, not to listen to the beggars in the street, and allow himself to be taken in; and before finally releasing him at the gate, she buttoned his greatcoat up to the chin, thrust two pellets of cotton into his ears, and gave him a parting kiss. Then she watched him tenderly for a minute or so as he strode on with the step of a man who needed not all those fostering admonitions and coddling cares.

As soon as he was out of sight of the lady and the windows of the villa, the gentleman cautiously unbuttoned his greatcoat, and removed the cotton from his ears. "She takes much after her mother, does Anna Maria," muttered the gentleman; "and I am very glad she is so well married."

He had not advanced many paces when, from a branch-road to the right that led to the railway station, another gentleman, much younger, and whose dress unequivocally bespoke him a minister of our Church, came suddenly upon him. Each with surprise recognized the other.

"What!—Mr. George Morley!"

"Mr. Hartopp!—How are you, my dear sir?—What brings you so far from home?"

"I am on a visit to my daughter, Anna Maria. She has not been long married—to young Jessop. Old Jessop is one of the principal merchants at Ouzelford—very respectable worthy family. The young couple are happily settled in a remarkably snug villa—that is it with the portico, not a hundred yards behind us, to the right. Very handsome town, Ouzelford; you are bound to it, of course?—we can walk together. I am going to look at the papers in the City Rooms—very fine rooms they are. But you are straight from London, perhaps, and have seen the day's journals? Any report of the meeting in aid of the Ragged Schools?"

"Not that I know of. I have not come from London this morning, nor seen the papers."

"Oh!—there's a strange-looking fellow following us; but perhaps he is your servant?"

"Not so, but my travelling companion—indeed my guide. In fact, I come to Ouzelford in the faint hope of discovering there a poor old friend of mine, of whom I have long been in search."

"Perhaps the Jessops can help you; they know everybody at Ouzelford. But now I meet you thus by surprise, Mr. George, I should very much like to ask your advice on a matter which has been much on my mind the last twenty-four hours, and which concerns a person I contrived to discover at Ouzelford, though I certainly was not in search of him—a person about whom you and I had a conversation a few years ago, when you were staying with your worthy father."

"Eh?" said George, quickly; "whom do you speak of?"

"That singular vagabond who took me in, you remember—called himself Chapman—real name William Losely, a returned convict. You would have it that he was innocent, though the man himself had pleaded guilty on his trial."

"His whole character belied his lips then. Oh, Mr. Hartopp, that man commit the crime imputed to him!—a planned, deliberate robbery—an ungrateful, infamous breach of trust! That man—*that!* he who rejects the money he does not earn, even when pressed on him by anxious imploring friends—he who has now gone voluntarily forth, aged and lonely, to wring his bread from the humblest calling rather than incur the risk of injuring the child with whose existence he had charged himself!—*he* a dark midnight thief! Believe him not, though his voice may say it. To screen, perhaps, some other man, he is telling you a noble lie. But what of him? Have you really seen him, and at Ouzelford?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"Yesterday. I was in the City Reading-Room, looking out of the window. I saw a great white dog in the street below;—I knew the dog at once, sir, though he is disguised by restoration to his natural coat, and his hair is as long as a Peruvian lama's. 'Tis Sir Isaac,' said I to myself; and behind Sir Isaac I saw Chapman, so to call him, carrying a basket with pedlar's wares, and, to my surprise, Old Jessop, who is a formal man, with a great deal of reserve and dignity, pompous indeed (but don't let that go farther), talking to Chapman quite affably, and actually buying something out of the basket. Presently Chapman went away, and was soon lost to sight. Jessop comes into the reading-room.

'I saw you,' said I, 'talking to an old fellow with a French dog.' 'Such a good old fellow,' said Jessop; 'has a way about him that gets into your very heart while he is talking. I should like to make you acquainted with him.' 'Thank you for nothing,' said I; 'I should be —taken in.' 'Never fear,' says Jessop, 'he would not take in a fly—the simplest creature.' I own I chuckled at that, Mr. George. 'And does he live here,' said I, 'or is he merely a wandering pedlar?' Then Jessop told me that he had seen him for the first time two or three weeks ago, and accosted him rudely, looking on him as a mere tramp; but Chapman answered so well, and showed so many pretty things in his basket, that Jessop soon found himself buying a pair of habit-cuffs for Anna Maria, and in the course of talk it came out, I suppose by a sign, that Chapman was a freemason, and Jessop is an enthusiast in that sort of nonsense, master of a lodge or something, and that was a new attraction.

In short, Jessop took a great fancy to him, patronized him, promised him protection, and actually recommended him to a lodging in the cottage of an old widow who lives in the outskirts of the town, and had once been a nurse in the Jessop family. And what do you think Jessop had just bought of this simple creature? A pair of worsted mittens as a present for me, and what is more, I have got them on at this moment—look! neat, I think, and monstrous warm. Now, I have hitherto kept my own counsel. I have not said to Jessop, 'Beware —that is the man who took me in.' But this concealment is a little on my conscience. On the one hand, it seems very cruel, even if the man did once commit a crime, in spite of your charitable convictions to the contrary, that I should be blabbing out his disgrace, and destroying perhaps his livelihood. On the other hand, if he should still be really a rogue, a robber, perhaps dangerous, ought I—ought I —in short—you are a clergyman and a fine scholar, sir—what ought I to do?"

"My dear Mr. Hartopp, do not vex yourself with this very honorable dilemma of conscience. Let me only find my poor old friend, my benefactor I may call him, and I hope to persuade him, if not to return to the home that waits him, at least to be my guest, or put himself under my care. Do you know the name of the widow with whom he lodges?"

"Yes—Halse; and I know the town well enough to conduct you, if not to the house itself, still to its immediate neighborhood. Pray allow me to accompany you; I should like it very much—for, though you may not think it, from the light way I have been talking of Chapman, I never was so interested in any man, never so charmed by any man; and it has often haunted me at night, thinking that I behaved too harshly to him, and that he was about on the wide world, an outcast, deprived of his little girl, whom he had trusted to me. And I should have run after him yesterday, or called on him this morning, and said, 'Let me serve you,' if it had not been for the severity with which he and his son were spoken of, and I myself rebuked for mentioning their very names, by a man whose opinion I, and indeed all the country, must hold in the highest respect—a man of the finest honor, the weightiest character—I mean Guy Darrell, the great Darrell."

George Morley sighed. "I believe Darrell knows nothing of the elder Losely, and is prejudiced against him by the misdeeds of the younger, to whose care you (and I cannot blame you, for I also was instrumental to the same transfer which might have proved calamitously fatal) surrendered the poor motherless girl."

"She is not with her grandfather now? She lives still, I hope? She was very delicate."

"She lives—she is safe. Ha—take care!"

These last words were spoken as a horseman, riding fast along the road towards the bridge that was now close at hand, came, without warning or heed, so close upon our two pedestrians, that George Morley had just time to pluck Hartopp aside from the horse's hoofs.

"An impudent, careless, ruffianly fellow, indeed!" said the mild Hartopp, indignatly, as he brushed from his sleeve the splash of dirt which the horseman bequeathed to it. "He must be drunk!"

The rider, gaining the bridge, was there detained at the toll-bar by some carts and waggons, and the two gentlemen passed him on the bridge, looking with some attention at his gloomy, unobservant countenance, and the powerful frame, in which, despite coarse garments and the change wrought by years of intemperate excess, was still visible the trace of that felicitous symmetry once so admirably

combining herculean strength with elastic elegance. Entering the town, the rider turned into the yard of the nearest inn. George Morley and Hartopp, followed at a little distance by Morley's travelling companion, Merle, passed on towards the other extremity of the town, and, after one or two inquiries for "Widow Halse, Prospect Row," they came to a few detached cottages, very prettily situated on a gentle hill, commanding in front the roofs of the city and the gleaming windows of the great cathedral, with somewhat large gardens in the rear. Mrs. Halse's dwelling was at the extreme end of this Row.

The house, however, was shut up; and a woman, who was standing at the door of the neighboring cottage, plaiting straw, informed the visitors that Mrs. Halse was gone out "charing" for the day, and that her lodger, who had his own key, seldom returned before dark, but that at that hour he was pretty sure to be found in the Cornmarket or the streets in its vicinity; and offered to send her little boy to discover and "fetch" him. George consulted apart with Merle, and decided on despatching the cobbler, with the boy for his guide, in quest of the pedlar, Merle being of course instructed not to let out by whom he was accompanied, lest Waife, in his obstinacy, should rather abscond than encounter the friends from whom he had fled. Merle, and a curly-headed urchin, who seemed delighted at the idea of hunting up Sir Isaac and Sir Isaac's master, set forth, and were soon out of sight. Hartopp and George opened the little garden-gate, and strolled into the garden at the back of the cottage, to seat themselves patiently on a bench beneath an old apple-tree.

Here they waited and conversed some minutes, till George observed that one of the casements on that side of the cottage was left open, and, involuntarily rising, he looked in; surveying with interest the room, which, he felt sure at the first glance, must be that occupied by his self-exiled friend; a neat pleasant little room—a bullfinch in a wicker cage on a ledge within the casement—a flower-pot beside it. Doubtless the window, which faced the southern sun, had been left open by the kind old man in order to cheer the bird and to gladden the plant. Waife's well-known pipe, and a tobacco-pouch worked for him by Sophy's fairy fingers, lay on a table near the fireplace, between casement and door; and George saw with emotion the Bible which he himself had given to the wanderer, lying also on the table, with the magnifying-glass which Waife had of late been obliged to employ in reading. Waife's habitual neatness was visible in the aspect of the room. To George it was evident that the very chairs had been arranged by his hand; that his hand had courteously given that fresh coat of varnish to the wretched portrait of a man in blue coat and buff waistcoat, representing, no doubt, the lamented spouse of the hospitable widow. George beckoned to Hartopp to come also and look within; and as the worthy trader peeped over his shoulder, the clergyman said, whisperingly, "Is there not something about a man's home which attests his character?—No 'pleading guilty' here."

Hartopp was about to answer, when they heard the key turn sharply in the outer door, and had scarcely time to draw somewhat back from the casement when Waife came hurriedly into the room, followed, not by Merle, but by the tall rough-looking horseman whom they had encountered on the road. "Thank Heaven," cried Waife, sinking on a chair, "out of sight, out of hearing now! Now you may speak; now I can listen! O wretched son of my lost angel, whom I so vainly sought to save by the sacrifice of all my claims to the respect of men, for what purpose do you seek me? I have nothing left that you can take away! Is it the child again? See—see—look round—search the house if you will—she is not here."

"Bear with me, if you can, sir," said Jasper, in tones that were almost meek; "you, at least, can say nothing that I will not bear. But I am in my right when I ask you to tell me without equivocation or reserve, if Sophy, though not actually within these walls, be near you, in this town or its neighborhood?—in short, still under your protection?"

"Not in this town—not near it—not under my protection; I swear."

"Do not swear, father; I have no belief in other men's oaths. I believe your simple word. Now comes my second question—remember I am still strictly in my right—where is she?—and under whose care?"

"I will not say. One reason why I have abandoned the very air she breathes, was, that

you might not trace her in tracing me. But she is out of your power again to kidnap and to sell. You might molest, harass, shame her, by proclaiming yourself her father; but regain her into your keeping, cast her to infamy and vice—never, never! She is now with no powerless, miserable convict, for whom Law has no respect. She is now no helpless infant, without a choice, without a will. She is safe from all, save the wanton unprofitable effort to disgrace her. O Jasper, Jasper, be human—she if so delicate of frame—she is so sensitive to reproach, so tremulously alive to honor—I—*I* am not fit to be near her now. I have been a tricksome shifty vagrant, and, innocent though I be, the felon's brand is on me! But you, you too, who never loved her, who cannot miss her, whose heart is not breaking at her loss as mine is now—you, *you*—to rise up from the reeking pesthouse in which you have dwelt by choice, and say, 'Descend from God's day with me'—Jasper, Jasper, you will not—you cannot; it would be the malignity of a devil!"

"Father, hold!" cried Jasper, writhing and livid; "I owe to you more than I do to that thing of pink and white. I know better than you the trumpery of all those waxen dolls of whom dupes make idols. At each turn of the street you may find them in baketsfull—blue-eyed or black-eyed, just the same worthless frippery or senseless toys; but every man dandling his own doll, whether he call it sweetheart or daughter, makes the same pulling boast that he has an angel of purity in his puppet of wax. Nay, hear me! to that girl I owe nothing. You know what I owe to you. You bid me not seek her, and say, 'I am your father!' Do you think it does not misbecome me more, and can it wound you less, when I come to you and remind you that I am your son!"

"Jasper!" faltered the old man, turning his face aside, for the touch of feeling towards himself, contrasting the cynicism with which Jasper spoke of other ties not less sacred, took the father by surprise.

"And," continued Jasper, "remembering how you once loved me—with what self-sacrifice you proved that love—it is with a bitter grudge against that girl that I see her thus take that place in your affection which was mine,—and you so indignant against me if I even presume to approach her. What! I have the malignity of a devil because I would not quietly lie down in yonder kennels to starve, or sink into the grade of those whom your daintier thief disdains; spies into ungarded areas, or cowardly skulkers by blind walls; while in the paltry girl, who you say is so well provided for, I see the last and sole resource which may prevent you from being still more degraded, still more afflicted by your son."

"What is it you want? Even if Sophy were in your power, Darrell would not be more disposed to enrich or relieve you. He will never believe your tale, nor deign even to look into its proofs."

"He might at last," said Jasper evasively. "Surely with all that wealth, no nearer heir than a remote kinsman in the son of a beggared spendthrift by a linendraper's daughter—he should need a grandchild more than you do; yet the proofs you speak of convinced yourself; *you* believe my tale."

"Believe—yes, for that belief was everything in the world to me! Ah, remember how joyously, when my term of sentence expired, I hastened to seek you at Paris, deceived by the rare letters with which you had deigned to cheer me—fondly dreaming that, in expiating your crime, I should have my reward in your redemption—should live to see you honored, honest, good—live to think your mother watched us from heaven with a smile on both—and that we should both join her at last—you purified by my atonement! Oh, and when I saw you so sunken, so hardened, exulting in vice as in a glory—bravo and partner in a gambler's hell—or, worse still, living on the plunder of miserable women, even the almsman of that vile Desmarets—my son, my son, my lost Lizzy's son blotted out of my world for ever!—then, then I should have died if you had not said, boasting of the lie which had wrung the gold from Darrell, 'But the child lives still.' Believed you—oh, yes, yes—for in that belief something was still left to me to cherish, to love, to live for!"

Here the old man's hurried voice died away in a passionate sob; and the direful son, all rebrobate though he was, slid from his chair, and bowed himself at his father's knee, covering his face with fell hands that trembled. "Sir, sir," he said, in broken reverential accents, "do not let me see you weep. You cannot believe me, but I say solemnly that, if

there be in me a single remnant of affection for any human being, it is for you. When I consented to leave you to bear the sentence which should have fallen on myself, sure I am that I was less basely selfish than absurdly vain. I fancied myself so born to good fortune!—so formed to captivate some rich girl!—and that you would return to share wealth with me; that the evening of your days would be happy; that you would be repaid by my splendor for your own disgrace! And when I did marry, and did ultimately get from the father-in-law who spurned me, the capital of his daughter's fortune, pitifully small though it was compared to my expectations, my first idea was to send half of that sum to you. But—but—I was living with those who thought nothing so silly as a good intention—nothing so bad as a good action. That mocking she-devil, Gabrielle, too! Then the witch's spell of that d—d green-table! Luck against one—wait! double the capital ere you send the half. Luck with one—how balk the tide? how fritter the capital just at the turn of doubling? Soon it grew irksome even to think of you; yet still when I did, I said, 'Life is long, I shall win riches; he shall share them some day or other!'—*Basta, basta!*—what idle twaddle or hollow brag all this must seem to you!"

"No," said Waife, feebly, and his hand drooped till it touched Jasper's bended shoulder, but at the touch recoiled as with an electric spasm.

"So, as you say, you found me at Paris. I told you where I had placed the child, not conceiving that Arabella would part with her, or you desire to hamper yourself with an encumbrance,—nay, I took for granted that you would find a home as before with some old friend or country cousin;—but fancying that your occasional visits to her might comfort you, since it seemed to please you so much when I said she lived. Thus we parted,—you, it seems, only anxious to save that child from ever falling into my hands, or those of Gabrielle Desmarets; I hastening to forget all but the riotous life around me till—"

"Till you came back to England to rob from me the smile of the only face that I knew would never wear contempt, and to tell the good man with whom I thought she had so safe a shelter, that I was a convicted robber, by whose very love her infancy was sullied. O Jasper! Jasper!"

"I never said that—never thought of saying it. Arabella Crane did so, with the reckless woman-will, to gain her object. But I did take the child from you. Why? Partly because I needed money so much that I would have sold a hecatomb of children for half what I was offered to bind the girl to a service that could not be very dreadful, since yourself had first placed her there;—and partly because you had shrunk, it seems, from appealing to old friends: you were living, like myself, from hand to mouth; what could that child be to you but a drag and a bother?"

"And you will tell me, I suppose," said Waife, with an incredulous bitter irony, that seemed to wither himself in venting it, so did his whole frame recoil and shrink—"you will tell me that it was from the same considerate tenderness that you would have again filched her from me some months later, to place her with that 'she-devil' who was once more by your side; to be reared and sold to—oh horror!—horror!—unimaginable horror!—that pure helpless infant!—you, armed with the name of father!—you, strong in that mighty form of man!"

"What do you mean? Oh, I remember now! When Gabrielle was in London, and I had seen you on the Bridge? Who could have told you that I meant to get the child from you at that time?"

Waife was silent. He could not betray Arabella Crane; and Jasper looked perplexed and thoughtful. Then gradually the dreadful nature of his father's accusing words seemed to become more clear to him; and he cried, with a fierce start and a swarthy flush—"But whoever told you that I harbored the design that it whitens your lip to hint at, lied, and foully. Harkye, sir, many years ago Gabrielle had made acquaintance with Darrell, under another name, as Matilda's friend (long story now—not worth telling); he had never, I believe, discovered the imposture. Just at the time you refer to, I heard that Darrell had been to France, inquiring himself into facts connected with my former story that Matilda's child was dead. That very inquiry seemed to show that he had not been so incredulous of my assertions of Sophy's claims on him as he had affected to be when I urged them.

He then went on into Italy. Talking this over with Gabrielle, she suggested, that if the child could be got into her possession, she would go with her in search of Darrell, resuming the name in which she had before known him—resuming the title and privilege of Matilda's friend. In that character he might listen to her; when he would not to me. She might confirm my statement—melt his heart—coax him into terms. She was the cleverest creature! I should have sold Sophy, it is true. For what? A provision to place me above want and crime. Sold her to whom? To the man who would see in her his daughter's child, rear her to inherit his wealth—guard her as his own honor. What! was this the design that so shocks you? *Basta, basta!* Again, I say, Enough. I never thought I should be so soft as to mutter excuses for what I have done. And if I do so now, the words seem forced from me against my will—forced from me, as if in seeing you I was again but a wild, lawless, wilful boy, who grieved to see you saddened by his faults, though he forgot his grief the moment you were out of sight."

"Oh, Jasper," cried Waife, now fairly placing his hand on Jasper's guilty head, and fixing his bright soft eye, swimming in tears, on that downcast, gloomy face. "You repent!—you repent! Yes; call back your BOYHOOD—call it back! Let it stand before you, now, visible, palpable! Lo! I see it! Do not you? Fearless, joyous Image! Wild, lawless, wilful, as you say. Wild from exuberant life; lawless as a bird is free, because air is boundless to untried exulting wings; wilful from the ease with which the bravery and beauty of Nature's radiant Darling forced way for each jocund whim through our yielding hearts! Silence! It is there! I see it, as I saw it rise in the empty air when guilt and ignominy first darkened round you; and my heart cried aloud, 'Not on him, not on him, not on that glorious shape of hope and promise—on me, whose life, useless hitherto, has lost all promise now—on me let fall the shame.' And my lips obeyed my heart, and I said—'Let the laws' will be done—I am the guilty man.' Cruel, cruel one! Was that sunny Boyhood then so long departed from you? On the verge of youth, and such maturity in craft and fraud—that when you stole into my room that dark winter eve, threw yourself at my feet, spoke but of thoughtless debts, and the fear that you should be thrust from an industrious honest calling, and I—I said—'No, no; fear not; the head of your firm likes you; he has written to me; I am trying already to raise the money you need; it shall be raised, no matter what it cost me; you shall be saved; my Lizzie's son shall never know the soil of a prison; shun temptation henceforth: be but honest, and I shall be repaid!'—what, even *then*, you were coldly meditating the crime that will make my very grave dishonored!"

"Meditating—not so! How could I be? Not till after what had thus passed between us, when you spoke with such indulgent kindness, did I ever know that I might more than save myself—by moneys—not raised at risk and loss to you! Remember, you had left me in the inner room, while you went forth to speak with Gunston. There I overheard him talk of notes he had never counted, and might never miss; describe the very place where they were kept; and then the idea came to me irresistibly; 'better rob him than despoil my own generous father.' Sir, I am not pretending to be better than I was. I was not quite the novice you supposed. Coveting pleasures or shows not within my reach, I had shrunk from draining you to supply the means; I had not had the same forbearance for the superfluous wealth of others. I had learned with what simple tools old locks may fly open; and none had ever suspected me, so I had no fear of danger, small need of premeditation; a nail on your mantlepiece, the cloven end of the hammer lying beside, to crook it when hot from the fire that blazed before me! I say this to show you that I did not come provided; nothing was planned beforehand; all was the project and work of the moment. Such was my haste, I burnt myself to the bone with the red iron—feeling no pain, or rather, at that age, bearing all pain without wincing.

"Before Gunston left you, my whole plan was then arranged — my sole instrument fashioned. You groan. But how could I fancy that there would be detection? How imagine, that even if moneys, never counted, *were* missed, suspicion could fall on you—better gentleman than he whom you served? And had it not been for that accursed cloak

which you so fondly wrapped round me, when I set off to catch the night-train back to ——; if it had not been, I say, for that cloak, there could have been no evidence to criminate either you or me—except that unlucky £5 note, which I pressed on you when we met at ——, where I was to hide till you had settled with my duns. And why did I press it on you?—because you had asked me if I had wherewithal about me on which to live meanwhile; and I, to save you from emptying your own purse, said—'Yes;' showed you some gold, and pressed on you the bank-note, which I said I could not want—to go, in small part, towards my debts; it was a childish inconsistent wish to please you: and you seemed so pleased to take it as a proof that I cared for you."

"For me!—no, no; for honor—for honor—for honor! I thought you cared for honor; and the proof of that care was, thrusting into these credulous hands the share of your midnight plunder!"

"Sir," resumed Jasper, persisting in the same startling combination of feeling, gentler and more reverential than could have been supposed to linger in his breast, and of the moral obtuseness that could not, save by vanishing glimpses, distinguish between crime and its consequences—between dishonor and detection—"Sir, I declare that I never conceived that I was exposing you to danger; nay, I meant, out of the money I had taken, to replace to you what you were about to raise, as soon as I could invent some plausible story of having earned it honestly. Stupid notions and clumsy schemes, as I now look back on them; but, as you say, I had not long left boyhood, and, fancying myself deep and knowing, was raw in the craft I had practised. *Basta, basta, basta!*"

Jasper, who had risen from his knees while speaking, here stamped heavily on the floor, as if with anger at the heart-stricken aspect of his silenced father; and continued with a voice that seemed struggling to regain its old imperious, rollicking, burly swell.

"What is done cannot be undone. Fling it aside, sir—look to the future; you with your pedlar's pack, I with my empty pockets! What can save you from the work-house—me from the hulks or gibbet? I know not, unless the persons sheltering that girl will buy me off by some provision which may be shared between us. Tell me, then, where she is; leave me to deal in the business as I best may. Pooh! why so scared? I will neither terrify nor kidnap her. I will shuffle off the crust of blackguard that has hardened round me. I will be sleek and smooth, as if I were still the exquisite Lothario—copied by would-be ruffflers, and spoiled by willing beauties. Oh, I can still play the gentleman, at least for an hour or two, if it be worth my while. Come, sir, come; trust me; out with the secret of this hidden maiden, whose interests should surely weigh not more with you than those of a starving son. What, you will not? Be it so. I suspect that I know where to look for her—on what noble thresholds to set my daring foot; what fair lady, mindful of former days—of girlish friendship—of virgin love—wraps in compassionate luxury Guy Darrell's rejected heiress! Ah, your looks tell me that I am hot on the scent. That fair lady I knew of old; she is rich—I helped to make her so. She owes me something. I will call and remind her of it. And—tut, sir, tut—you shall not go to the workhouse, nor I to the hulks."

Here the old man, hitherto seated, rose—slowly, with feebleness and effort, till he gained his full height; then age, infirmity, and weakness, seemed to vanish. In the erect head, the broad massive chest, in the whole presence, there was dignity—there was power.

"Hark to me, unhappy reprobate, and heed me well! To save that child from the breath of disgrace—to place her in what you yourself assured me were her rights amidst those in whose dwellings I lost the privilege to dwell when I took to myself your awful burthen—I thought to resign her charge for ever in this world. Think not that I will fly her now, when you invade. No—since my prayers will not move you—since my sacrifice to you has been so fruitless—since my absence from herself does not attain its end: there, where you find her, shall you again meet me! And if there we meet, and you come with the intent to destroy her peace and blast her fortune, then I, William Losely, am no more the felon. In the face of day I will proclaim the truth, and say, 'Robber, change place in earth's scorn with me; stand in the dock, where thy father stood in vain to save thee!'"

"Bah, sir—too late now; who would listen to you?"

"All who have once known me—all will listen. Friends of power and station will take up my cause. There will be fresh inquiry into facts that I held back—evidence that, in pleading guilty, I suppressed—ungrateful one—to ward away suspicion from you."

"Say what you will," said Jasper, swaying his massive form to and fro, with a roiling gesture which spoke of cold defiance, "I am no hypocrite in fair repute whom such threats would frighten. If you choose to thwart me in what I always held my last resource for meat and drink, I must stand in the dock even, perhaps, on a heavier charge than one so stale. Each for himself; do your worst—what does it matter?"

"What does it matter that a father should accuse his son! No, no—son, son, son—this must not be!—Let it not be!—let me complete my martyrdom! I ask no reversal of man's decree, except before the Divine Tribunal. Jasper, Jasper—child of my love, spare the sole thing left to fill up the chasms in the heart that you laid waste. Speak not of starving, or of fresh crime. Stay—share this refuge! I WILL WORK FOR BOTH!"

Once more, and this time thoroughly, Jasper's hideous levity and coarse bravado gave way before the lingering human sentiment knitting him back to childhood, which the sight and voice of his injured father had called forth with spasms and throes, as a seer calls the long-buried from a grave. And as the old man extended his arms pleadingly towards him, Jasper, with a gasping sound—half groan, half sob—sprang forward, caught both the hands in his own strong grasp, lifted them to his lips, kissed them, and then, gaining the door with a rapid stride, said, in hoarse broken tones, "Share your refuge! no—no—I should break your heart downright did you see me daily—hourly as I am! You work for both!—you—you!" His voice stopped, choked for a brief moment, then hurried on: "As for that girl—you—you—you are—but no matter, I will try to obey you—will try to wrestle against hunger, despair, and thoughts that whisper sinking men with devil's tongues. I will try—I will try; if I succeed not, keep your threat—accuse me—give me up to justice—clear yourself; but if you would crush me more than by the heaviest curse, never again speak to me with such dreadful tenderness! Cling not to me, old man; release me, I say;—there—there;—off. Ah! I did not hurt you? Brute that I am—you bless me—you—you! And I dare not bless again! Let me go—let me go—let me go!" He wrenched himself away from his father's clasp—drowning with loud tone his pathetic soothings—out of the house—down the hill—lost to sight in the shades of the falling eve.

CHAPTER VI.

Gentleman Waife does not forget an old friend. The old friend reconciles Astrology to Prudence, and is under the influence of Benefics. Mr. Hartopp hat in hand to Gentleman Waife.

WAIFE fell on the floor of his threshold, exclaiming, sobbing, moaning, as voice itself gradually died away. The dog, who had been shut out from the house, and remained, ears erect, head drooping, close at the door, rushed in as Jasper burst forth. The two listeners at the open casement now stole round; there was the dog, its paw on the old man's shoulder, trying to attract his notice, and whining low.

Tenderly—reverentially, they lift the poor martyr—evermore cleared in their eyes from stain, from question; the dishonoring brand transmuted into the hallowing cross! And when the old man at length recovered consciousness, his head was pillowed on the breast of the spotless, noble Preacher; and the decorous English Trader, with instinctive deference for repute and respect for law, was kneeling by his side, clasping his hand; and as Waife glanced down, confusedly wondering, Hartopp exclaimed, half sobbing, "Forgive me; you said I should repent if I knew all! I do repent! I do! Forgive me—I shall never forgive myself."

"Have I been dreaming? What is all this? You here too, Mr. George! But—but there was ANOTHER. Gone! ah—gone—gone! lost, lost! Ha! did you overhear us?"

"We overheard you—at that window! See, spite of yourself, Heaven lets your innocence be known, and in that innocence, your sublime self-sacrifice."

"Hush! you will never betray me, either of

you—never! A father turn against his son! —horrible!"

Again he seemed on the point of swooning. In a few moment's more, his mind began evidently to wander somewhat; and just as Merle (who, with his urchin-guide had wandered vainly over the old town in search of the pedlar, until told that he had been seen in a by-street, stopped and accosted by a tall man in a rough great-coat, and then hurrying off, followed by the stranger) came back to report his ill-success, Hartopp and George had led Waife up-stairs into his sleeping-room, laid him down on his bed, and were standing beside him watching his troubled face, and whispering to each other in alarm.

Waife overheard Hartopp proposing to go in search of medical assistance, and exclaimed piteously, "No, that would scare me to death. No doctors—no eavesdroppers. Leave me to myself—quiet and darkness; I shall be well to-morrow."

George drew the curtains round the bed, and Waife caught him by the arm. "You will not let out what you heard, I know; you understand how little I can now care for men's judgments; but how dreadful it would be to undo all I have done—I to be witness against my Lizzie's child! I—I! I trust you—dear, dear Mr. Morley; make Mr. Hartopp sensible that, if he would not drive me mad, not a syllable of what he heard must go forth —'twould be base in him."

"Nay!" said Hartopp, whispering also through the dark,—"Don't fear me; I will hold my peace, though 'tis very hard not to tell Williams at least that you not take me in. But you shall be obeyed."

They drew away Merle, who was wondering what the whispered talk was about, catching a word or two here and there, and left the old man not quite to solitude,—Waife's hand, in quitting George's grasp, dropped on the dog's head.

Hartopp went back to his daughter's home in a state of great excitement, drinking more wine than usual at dinner, talking more magisterially than he had ever been known to talk, railing quite misanthropically against the world; observing, that Williams had become unsufferably overbearing, and should be pensioned off: in short, casting the whole family into the greatest perplexity to guess what had come to the mild man. Merle found himself a lodging, and cast a horary scheme as to what would happen to Waife and himself for the next three months, and found all the aspects so perversely contradictory, that he owned he was no wiser as to the future than he was before the scheme was cast. George Morley remained in the Cottage, stealing up, from time to time, to Waife's room, but not fatiguing him with talk. Before midnight, the old man slept, but his slumber was much perturbed, as if by fearful dreams. However, he rose early, very weak, but free from fever, and in full possession of his reason. To George's delight, Waife's first words to him then were expressive of a wish to return to Sophy. "He had dreamed," he said, "that he had heard her voice calling out to him to come to her help."

He would not revert to the scene with Jasper. George once ventured to touch on that reminiscence, but the old man's look became so imploring that he desisted. Nevertheless, it was evident to the Pastor, that Waife's desire of return was induced by his belief that he had become necessary to Sophy's protection. Jasper, whose remorse would probably be very shortlived, had clearly discovered Sophy's residence, and as clearly Waife, and Waife alone, still retained some hold over his rugged breast. Perhaps, too, the old man had no longer the same dread of encountering Jasper; rather, perhaps, a faint hope that, in another meeting, he might more availingly soften his son's heart. He was not only willing, then—he was eager to depart, and either regained or assumed much of his old cheerfulness in settling with his hostess, and parting with Merle, on whom he forced his latest savings, and the tasteful contents of his pannier. Then he took aside George, and whispered in his ear, "A very honest, kind-hearted man, sir; can you deliver him from the Planets?—they bring him into sad trouble. Is there no opening for a cobbler at Humberston?"

George nodded, and went back to Merle, who was wiping his eyes with his coat-sleeve. "My good friend," said the scholar, "do me two favors, besides the greater one you have already bestowed in conducting me back to a revered friend. First, let me buy of you the contents of that basket; I have children

amongst whom I would divide them as heir-looms; next, as we were travelling hither, you told me that, in your younger days, ere you took to a craft which does not seem to have prospered, you were brought up to country pursuits, and knew all about cows and sheep, their care and their maladies. Well, I have a few acres of glebeland on my own hands, not enough for a bailiff—too much for my gardener—and a pretty cottage, which once belonged to a schoolmaster, but we have built him a larger one; it is now vacant, and at your service. Come and take all trouble of land and stock off my hands; we shall not quarrel about the salary. But, harkye, my friend—on one proviso—give up the Crystal, and leave the Stars to mind their own business."

"Please your Reverence," said Merle, who, at the earlier part of the address, had evinced the most grateful emotion, but who, at the proviso which closed it, jerked himself up, dignified and displeased—"Please you Reverence, no! Kit Merle is not so unnatural as to swop away his Significator at Birth for a mess of porritch! There was that forrin chap, Falley-Leo—he stuck to the stars, or the sun, which is the same thing—and the stars stuck by him, and brought him honor and glory, though the Parsons war dead agin him. He had Malefics in his Ninth House, which belongs to Parsons."

"Can't the matter be compromised, dear Mr. George?" said Waife, persuasively. "Suppose Merle promises to keep his crystal and astrological schemes to himself, or at least only talk of them to you;—they can't hurt you, I should think, sir? And science is a sacred thing, Merle; and the Chaldees, who were the great star-gazers, never degraded themselves by showing off to the vulgar. Mr. George, who is a scholar, will convince you of that fact."

"Content," said George. "So long as Mr. Merle will leave my children and servants, and the parish generally, in happy ignorance of the future, I give him the fullest leave to discuss his science with myself whenever we chat together on summer noons or in winter evenings; and perhaps I may——"

"Be converted?" said Waife, with a twinkling gleam of the playful Humor which had ever sported along his thorny way by the side of Sorrow.

"I did not mean that," said the Parson, smiling; "rather the contrary. What say you, Merle? Is it not a bargain?"

"Sir—God bless you!" cried Merle, simply; "I see you won't let me stand in my own light. And what Gentleman Waife says as to the vulgar, is uncommon true."

This matter settled, and Merle's future secured in a way that his stars, or his version of their language, had not foretold to him, George and Waife walked on to the station, Merle following with the Parson's small carpet-bag, and Sir Isaac charged with Waife's bundle. They had not gone many yards before they met Hartopp, who was indeed on his way to Prospect Row. He was vexed at learning Waife was about to leave so abruptly; he had set his heart on coaxing him to return to Gatesboro' with himself—astounding Williams and Mrs. H., and proclaiming to Market Place and High Street, that, in deeming Mr. Chapman a good and a great man disguised, he, Josiah Hartopp, had not been taken in. He consoled himself a little for Waife's refusal of this kind invitation and unexpected departure, by walking proudly beside him to the station, finding it thronged with passengers—some of them great burgesses of Ouzelford—in whose presence he kept bowing his head to Waife with every word he uttered; and, calling the guard—who was no stranger to his own name and importance—he told him pompously to be particularly attentive to that elderly gentleman, and see that he and his companion had a carriage to themselves all the way, and that Sir Isaac had a particularly comfortable box.

"A very great man," he said, with his finger to his lip, "only he will not have it known—just at present." The guard stares, and promises all deference—opens the door of a central first-class carriage—assures Waife that he and his friend shall not be disturbed by other passengers. The train heaves into movement—Hartopp runs on by its side along the stand—his hat off—kissing his hand; then, as the convoy shoots under yon dark tunnel, and is lost to sight, he turns back, and seeing Merle, says to him, "You know that gentleman—the old one?"

"Yes, a many year."

"Ever heard anything against him?"

"Yes, once—at Gatesboro'."

"At Gatesboro' !—ah ! and you did not believe it ? "

"Only jist for a moment, transiting."

"I envy you," said Hartopp; and he went off with a sigh.

CHAPTER VII.

Jasper Losely in his element. O young Reader, whosoever thou art, on whom Nature has bestowed her magnificent gift of physical power with the joys it commands, with the daring that springs from it—on closing this chapter, pause a moment, and think—"What wilt thou do with it ?" Shall it be brute-like or God-like ? With what advantage for life—its delights or its perils—toils borne with ease, and glories cheap bought—dost thou start at life's onset ? Give thy sinews a Mind that conceives the Heroic, and what noble things thou mayst do! But value thy sinews for rude Strength alone, and that strength may be turned to thy shame and thy torture. The Wealth of thy life will but tempt to its Waste. Abuse, at first felt not, will poison the uses of Sense. Wild bulls gore and trample their foes. Thou hast Soul! Wilt thou trample and gore it ?

Jasper Losely, on quitting his father, spent his last coins in payment for his horse's food, and in fiery drink for himself. In haste he mounted—in haste he spurred on to London; not even pence for the toll-bars. Where he found the gates open, he dashed through them headlong; where closed, as the night advanced, he forced his horse across the fields, over hedge and ditch—more than once the animal falling with him—more than once thrown from the saddle; for, while a most daring, he was not a very practised rider; but it was not easy to break bones so strong, and though bruised and dizzy, he continued his fierce way. At morning his horse was thoroughly exhausted, and at the first village he reached after sunrise, he left the poor beast at an inn, and succeeded in borrowing of the landlord £1 on the pawn of the horse thus left as hostage. Resolved to husband this sum, he performed the rest of his journey on foot.

He reached London at night, and went straight to Cutts's lodgings. Cutts was, however, in the club-room of those dark associates against whom Losely had been warned. Oblivious of his solemn promise to Arabella, Jasper startled the revellers as he stalked into the room, and towards the chair of honor at the far end of it, on which he had been accustomed to lord it over the fell groups he had treated out of Poole's purpose: One of the biggest and most redoubted of the Black Family was now in that seat of dignity, and refusing surily to yield it at Jasper's rude summons, was seized by the scuff of the neck, and literally hurled on the table in front, coming down with clatter and clash amongst mugs and glasses. Jasper seated himself coolly, while the hubbub began to swell—and roared for drink. An old man, who served as drawer to these cavaliers, went out to obey the order; and when he was gone, those near the door swung across it a heavy bar. Wrath against the domineering intruder was gathering, and waited but the moment to explode. Jasper turuing round his bloodshot eyes, saw Cutts within a few chairs of him, seeking to shrink out of sight.

"Cutts, come hither," cried he, imperiously.

Cutts did not stir.

"Throw me that cur this way—you, who sit next him."

"Don't don't; his mad fit is on him; he will murder me—murder me, who have helped and saved you all so often. Stand by me."

"We will," said both his neighbors, the one groping for his case-knife, the other for his revolver.

"Do you fear I should lop your ears, dog," cried Jasper, "for shrinking from my side with your tail between your legs ? Pooh ! I scorn to waste force on a thing so small. After all, I am glad you left me; I did not want you. You will find your horse at an inn in the village of ——. I will pay for its hire whenever we meet again. Meanwhile, find another master—I discharge you. *Mille tonnerres !* why does that weasel-faced snail not bring me the brandy ? By your leave,"—and he appropriated to himself the brimming glass of his next neighbor.

Thus refreshed, he glanced round through the reek of tobacco smoke; saw the man he had dislodged, and who, rather amazed than stunned by his fall, had kept silence on rising, and was now ominously interchanging muttered words with two of his comrades, who were also on their legs. Jasper turned from him contemptuously;—with increasing contempt in his hard, fierce sneer, noted the lowering frowns on either side the Pandemonium; and it was only with an angry flash from his eyes that he marked, on closing his survey, the bar dropped

across the door, and two forms, knife in hand, stationed at the threshold.

"Aha! my jolly companions," said he then, "you do right to bar the door. Prudent families can't settle their quarrels too snugly amongst themselves. I am come here on purpose to give you all a proper scolding, and if some of you don't hang your heads for shame before I have done, you'll die more game than I think for, whenever you come to the last Drop."

He rose as he thus spoke, folding his sinewy arms across his wide chest. Most of the men had risen too—some, however, remained seated; there might be eighteen or twenty in all. Every eye was fixed on him, and many a hand was on a deadly weapon.

"Scum of the earth!" burst forth Jasper, with voice like a roll of thunder, "I stooped to come amongst you—I shared amongst you my money. Was any one of you too poor to pay up his club fee—to buy a draught of Forgetfulness—I said, 'Brother, take!' Did brawl break out in your jollities—were knives drawn—a throat in danger—this right hand struck down the uproar, crushed back the coward murder. If I did not join in your rogueries, it was because they were sneaking and pitiful. I came as your Patron, not as your Pal; I did not meddle with your secrets—did not touch your plunder. I owed you nothing. Offal that you are! to me you owed drink, and meat, and good fellowship. I gave you mirth, and I gave you Law; and in return ye laid a plot amongst you to get rid of me;—how, ye white-livered scoundrels? Oho! not by those fists, and knives, and bludgeons. All your pigeon breasts clubbed together had not manhood for that. But to palm off upon me some dastardly deed of your own; by snares and scraps of false evidence—false oaths, too, no doubt—to smuggle me off to the hangman. That was your precious contrivance. Once again I am here; but this once only. What for?—why, to laugh at, and spit at, and spurn you. And if one man amongst you has in him an ounce of man's blood, let him show me the traitors who planned that pitiful project, and be they a dozen, they shall carry the mark of this hand till their carcasses go to the surgeon's scalpel."

He ceased. Though each was now hustling the other towards him, and the whole pack of miscreants was closing up like hounds round a wild boar at bay, the only one who gave audible tongue was that thin spinter of life called Cutts!

"Look you, General Jas., it was all a mistake your ever coming here. You were a fine fellow once, particularly in the French way of doing business—large prizes and lots of row. That don't suit us; we are quiet Englishmen, You brag of beating and bullying the gentlemen who admit you amongst them, and of not sharing their plans or risks; but that sort of thing is quite out of order—no precedent for it. Ho do we know that you are not a spy, or could not be made one, since you say you owe us nothing, and hold us in such scorn? Truth is, we are all sick of you. You say you only come this once: very well, you have spun your yarn—now go. That's all we want; go in peace, and never trouble us again. Gentlemen, I move that General Jas. be expelled this club, and requested to withdraw."

"I second it," said the man whom Jasper had flung on the table.

"Those who are in favor of the resolution, hold up their hands;—all—carried unanimously. General Jas. is expelled."

"Expel me!" said Jasper, who in the meanwhile, swaying to and fro his brawny bulk, had cleared the space round him, and stood resting his hands on the heavy arm-chair from which he had risen.

A hostile and simultaneous movement of the group brought four or five of the foremost on him. Up rose the chair on which Jasper had leaned—up it rose in his right hand, and two of the assailants fell as falls an ox to the butcher's blow. With his left hand he wrenched a knife from a third of the foes, and thus armed with blade and buckler, he sprang on the table, towering over all. Before him was the man with the revolver, a genteeler outlaw than the rest—ticket-of-leave man, who had been transported for forgery. "Shall I shoot him?" whispered this knave to Cutts. Cutts drew back the hesitating arm. "No; the noise! bludgeons safer."

Pounce, as Cutts whispered—pounce as a hawk on its quarry, darted Jasper's swoop on the Forger, and the next moment, flinging the chair in the faces of those who were now swarming up the table, Jasper was armed with the revolver, which he had clutched from its

startled owner, and its six barrels threatened death, right and left, beside and before and around him, as he turned from face to face. Instantly there fell a hush—instantly the assault paused. Every one felt that there no faltering would make the hand tremble or the ball swerve. Wherever Jasper turned the foes recoiled. He laughed with audacious mockery as he surveyed the recreants.

"Down with your arms, each of you—down that knife, down that bludgeon. That's well. Down yours—there; yours—yours. What, all down! Pile them here on the table at my feet. Dogs, what do you fear?—death? The first who refuses dies."

Mute and servile as a repentant Legion to a Cæser's order, the knaves piled their weapons.

"Unbar the door, you two. You, orator Cutts, go in front; light a candle—open the street-door. So—so—so. Who will treat me with a parting-cup—to your healths? Thank you, sir. Fall back there; stand back—along the wall—each of you. Line my way. Ho, ho!—*you* harm me—*you* daunt me—you—you! Stop—I have a resolution to propose. Hear it, and cheer. 'That this meeting rescinds the resolution for the expulsion of General Jasper, and entreats him humbly to remain, the pride and ornament of the club!' Those who are for that resolution, hold up their hands—as many as are against it, theirs. Carried unanimously. Gentlemen, I thank you—proudest day of my life—but I'll see you hanged first; and till that sight diverts me,—gentlemen, your health."

Descending from his eminence, he passed slowly down the room unscathed, unmenaced, and, with a low mocking bow at the threshold, strode along the passage to the street-door. There, seeing Cutts with the light in his hand, he uncocked the pistol, striking off the caps, and giving it to his quondam associate, said—"Return that to its owner, with my compliments. One word—speak truth, and fear nothing. Did you send help to Darrell?"

"No; I swear it."

"I am sorry for it. I should like to have owed so trusty a friend that one favor. Go back to your pals. Understand now why I scorned to work with such rotten tools."

"A wonderful fellow, indeed!" muttered Cutts, as his eye followed the receding form of the triumphant bravo. "All London might look to itself, if he had more solid brains, and less liquid fire in them."

CHAPTER VIII.

Jasper Losely sleeps under the portico from which Falsehood was borne by Black Horses. He forgets a promise, reweaves a scheme, visits a river-side; and a door closes on the Strong Man and the Grim Woman.

JASPER had satisfied the wild yearnings of his wounded vanity. He had vindicated his claim to hardihood and address, which it seemed to him he had forfeited in his interview with Darrell. With crest erect and a positive sense of elation, of animal joy that predominated over hunger, fatigue, remorse, he strided on—he knew not whither. He would not go back to his former lodgings; they were too familiarly known to the set which he had just flung from him, with a vague resolve to abjure henceforth all accomplices, and trust to himself alone. The hour was now late—the streets deserted—the air bitingly cold. Must he at last resign himself to the loathed dictation of Arabella Crane. Well, he now preferred even that to humbling himself to Darrell, after what had passed. Darrell's parting words had certainly implied that he would not be as obdurate to entreaty as he had shown himself to threats.

But Jasper was in no humor to entreat Mechanically he continued to stride on to-towards the solitary district in which Arebella held her home; but the night was so far advanced that he shrunk from disturbing the grim woman at that hour—almost as respectfully afraid of her dark eye and stern voice as the outlaws he had quitted were of his own crushing hand and levelled pistol. So, finding himself in one of the large squares of Bloomsbury, he gathered himself up under the sheltering porch of a spacious mansion, unconscious that it was the very residence which Darrell had once occupied, and that from that portico the Black Horses had borne away the mother of his wife. In a few minutes he was fast asleep—sleeping with such heavy deathlike soundness, that the policeman passing him on his beat, after one

or two vain attempts to rouse him, was seized with a rare compassion, and suffered the weary outcast to slumber on.

When Jasper woke at last in the grey dawn, he felt a strange numbness in his limbs; it was even with difficulty that he could lift himself up. This sensation gradually wearing off, was followed by a quick tingling down the arms to the tips of the fingers. A gloomy noise rang in his ears, like the boom of funeral church-bells; and the pavement seemed to be sliding from under him. Little heeding these symptoms, which he ascribed to cold and want of food, and rather agreeably surprised not to feel the gnaw of his accostumed pains, Jasper now betook himself to Podden Place. The house was still unclosed; and it was not till Jasper's knock had been pretty often repeated, that the bolts were withdrawn from the door, and Bridgett Greggs appeared. "Oh, it is you, Mr. Losely," she said, with much sullenness, but with no apparent surprise. "Mistress thought you would come while she was away, and I'm to get you the bed-room you had, over the stationer's, six years ago, if you like it. You are to take your meals here, and have the best of everything; that's mistress's orders."

"Oh, Mrs. Crane is out of town," said Jasper, much relieved; "where has she gone?"

"I don't know."

"When will she be back?"

"In a few days; so she told me. Will you walk in, and have breakfast? Mistress said there was to be always plenty in the house—you might come any moment. Please scrape your feet."

Jasper heavily mounted into the drawing-room, and impatiently awaited the substantial refreshments, which were soon placed before him. The room looked unaltered, as if he had left it but the day before—the prim book-shelves—the empty bridcage—the broken lute—the patent easy-chair—the footstool—the sofa, which had been added to the original furniture for his express comfort, in the days when he was first adopted as a son—nay, on, the hearth-rug the very slippers, on the back of the chair the very dressing-gown, graciously worn by him while yet the fairness of his form justified his fond respect for it.

For that day he was contented with the negative luxury of complete repose; the more so as, in every attempt to move, he felt the same numbness of limb as that with which he had woke, accompanied by a kind of painful weight at the back of the head, and at the junction which the great seat of intelligence forms at the spine with the great mainspring of force; and, withal, a reluctance to stir, and a more than usual inclination to doze. But the next day, though these unpleasant sensations continued, his impatience of thought and hate of solitude made him anxious to go forth and seek some distraction. No distraction left to him but the gambling-table—no companions but fellow-victims in that sucking whirlpool. Well, he knew a low gaming-house, open all day as all night. Wishing to add somewhat to the miserable remains of the £1 borrowed on the horse, that made all his capital, he asked Bridgett, indifferently, to oblige him with two or three sovereigns; if she had them not, she might borrow them in the neighborhood till her mistress returned.

Bridgett answered, with ill-simulated glee, that her mistress had given positive orders that Mr. Losely was to have everything he called for except—money. Jasper colored with wrath and shame; but he said no more—whistled—took his hat—went out—repaired to the gaming-house—lost his last shilling, and returned moodily to dine in Podden Place. The austerity of the room, the loneliness of the evening, began now to inspire him with unmitigated disgust, which was added in fresh account to his old score of repugnance for the absent Arabella. The affront put upon him in the orders which Bridgett had so faithfully repeated, made him yet more distastefully contemplate the dire necessity of falling under the rigid despotism of this determined guardian: it was like going back to a preparatory school, to be mulcted of pocket-money, and set in a dark corner! But what other resource? None but appeal to Darrell—still more intolerable; except—he paused in his cogitation, shook his head, muttered "No, no."

But that "except" *would* return!—except to forget his father's prayer and his own promise—except to hunt out Sophy, and extract from the generosity, campassion, or fear of her protectress, some such conditions as he would have wrung from Darrell. He had no doubt now that the girl was with Lady Montfort; he felt that, if she really loved Sophy, and were

sheltering her in tender recollection, whether of Matilda or of Darrell himself, he might much more easily work on the delicate nerves of a woman, shrinking from all noise and scandal, than he could on the stubborn pride of his resolute father-in-law. Perhaps it was on account of Sophy—perhaps to plead for her—that Lady Montfort had gone to Fawley; perhaps the grief visible on that lady's countenance, as he caught so hasty a glimpse of it, might be occasioned by the failure of her mission. If so, there might be now some breach or dissension between her and Darrell, which might render the Marchioness still more accessible to his demands.

As for his father—if Jasper played his cards well and luckily, his father might never know of his disobedience; he might coax or frighten Lady Montfort into secresy. It might be quite unnecessary for him even to see Sophy; if she caught sight of him, she would surely no more recognize his altered features than Rugge had done. These thoughts gathered on him stronger and stronger all the evening, and grew into resolves with the next morning. He sallied out after breakfast—the same numbness; but he walked it off. Easy enough to find the address of the Marchioness of Montfort. He asked it boldly of the porter at the well-known house of the present Lord, and, on learning it, proceeded at once to Richmond—on foot, and thence to the small, scattered hamlet immediately contiguous to Lady Montfort's villa.

Here he found two or three idle boatmen lounging near the river-side; and entering into conversation with them about their craft, which was sufficiently familiar to him, for he had plied the strongest oar on that tide in the holidays of his youth, he proceeded to inquiries, which were readily and unsuspectingly answered. 'Yes, there *was* a young lady with Lady Montfort; they did not know her name. They had seen her often in the lawn—seen her, too, at church. She was very pretty; yes, she had blue eyes and fair hair.' Of his father he only heard that 'there had been an old gentleman such as he described—lame, and with one eye—who had lived some months ago in a cottage on Lady Montfort's grounds. They heard he had gone away. He had made baskets—they did not know if for sale; if so, perhaps for a charity. They supposed he was a gentleman, for they had heard he was some relation to the young lady. But Lady Montfort's head-coachman lived in the village, and could, no doubt, give him all the information he required.' Jasper was too wary to call on the coachman; he had learned enough for the present.

Had he prosecuted his recearches farther, he might only have exposed himself to questions, and to the chance of his inquiries being repeated to Lady Montfort by one of her servants, and thus setting her on her guard; for no doubt his father had cautioned her against him. It never occurred to him that the old man could already have returned; and those to whom he confined his interrogatories were quite ignorant of the fact. Jasper had no intention to intrude himself that day on Lady Montfort. His self-love shrank from presenting himself to a lady of such rank, and to whom he had been once presented on equal terms, as the bridegroom of her friend and the confidential visitor to her mother, in habiliments that bespoke so utter a fall. Better, too, on all accounts, to appear something of a gentleman; more likely to excite pity for suffering—less likely to suggest excuse for rebutting his claims, and showing him to the door. Nay, indeed, so dressed, in that villanous pea-jacket, and with all other habiliments to match, would any servant admit him?—could he get into Lady Montfort's presence? He must go back—wait for Mrs. Crane's return. Doubtless she would hail his wish—half a reform in itself—to cast off the outward signs of an accepted degradation.

Accordingly he went back to town in much better spirits, and so absorbed in his hopes, that, when he arrived at Podden Place, he did not observe that, from some obliquity of vision, or want of the normal correpsondence between will and muscle, his hand twice missed the knocker—wandering first above, then below it; and that, when actually in his clasp, he did not feel the solid iron: the sense of touch seemed suspended. Bridgett appeared. "Mistress is come back, and will see you."

Jasper did not look charmed; he winced, but screwed up his courage, and mounted the stairs—slowly—heavily. From the landing-place above glared down the dark shining eyes that had almost quailed his bold spirit nearly six years before; and almost in the same

words as then, a voice as exulting, but less stern, said,—"So you come at last to me, Jasper Losely—you are come."

Rapidly—flittingly, with a step noiseless as a spectre's, Arabella Crane descended the stairs; but she did not, as when he first sought that house in the years before, grasp his hand or gaze into his face. Rather, it was with a shrinking avoidance of his touch—with something like a shudder—that she glided by him into the open drawing-room, beckoning him to follow. He halted a moment; he felt a longing to retreat—to fly the house; his superstitious awe of her very benefits came back to him more strongly than ever. But her help at the moment was necessary to his very hope to escape all future need of her, and, though with a vague forboding of unconjecturable evil, he stepped into the room, and the door closed on both.

BOOK ELEVENTH.

CHAPTER I.

"The course of true love never does run smooth!" May it not be because when there are no obstacles, there are no tests to the truth of Love? Where the course is smooth, the stream is crowded with pleasure-boats. Where the wave swells, and the shoals threaten, and the sky lowers, the pleasure-boats have gone back into harbor. Ships fitted for rough weather are those built and stored for long voyage.

I PASS over the joyous meeting between Waife and Sophy. I pass over George's account to his fair cousin of the scene he and Hartopp had witnessed, in which Waife's innocence had been manifested, and his reasons for accepting the penalties of guilt had been explained. The first few agitated days following Waife's return have rolled away. He is resettled in the cottage from which he had fled; he refuses, as before, to take up his abode at Lady Montfort's house. But Sophy has been almost constantly his companion, and Lady Montfort herself has spent hours with him each day—sometimes in his rustic parlor, sometimes in the small garden-plot round his cottage, to which his rambles are confined. George has gone back to his home and duties at Humberston, promising very soon to revisit his old friend, and discuss future plans.

The scholar, though with a sharp pang, conceding to Waife that all attempt publicly to clear his good name at the cost of reversing the sacrifice he had made, must be forborne, could not, however, be induced to pledge himself to unconditional silence. George felt that there were at least some others to whom the knowledge of Waife's innocence was imperatively due.

Waife is seated by his open window. It is noon; there is sunshine in the pale blue skies—an unusual softness in the wintry air. His Bible lies on the table beside him. He has just set his mark in the page, and reverently closed the Book. He is alone. Lady Montfort—who since her return from Fawley, has been suffering from a kind of hectic fever, accompanied by a languor that made even the walk to Waife's cottage a fatigue, which the sweetness of her kindly nature enabled her to overcome, and would not permit her to confess—has been so much worse that morning as to be unable to leave her room. Sophy has gone to see her.

Waife is now leaning his face upon his hand, and that face is sadder and more disquieted than it had been, perhaps, in all his wanderings. His darling Sophy is evidently unhappy. Her sorrow had not been visible during the first two or three days of his return, chased away by the joy of seeing him—the excitement of tender reproach and question—of tears that seemed as joyous as the silvery laugh which responded to the gaiety that sported round the depth of feeling, with which he himself beheld her once more clinging to his side, or seated, with upward loving eyes, on the footstool by his knees. Even at the first look, however, he had found her altered; her cheek was thinner, her color paled. That might be from fretting for him. She would be herself again, now that her tender anxiety was relieved. But she did not become herself again. The arch and playful Sophy he had left was gone, as if never to return. He marked that her step, once so bounding, had become slow and spiritless.

Often when she sate near him, seemingly reading or at her work, he noticed that her eyes were not on the page—that the work stopped abruptly in listless hands; and then he would hear her sigh—a heavy but short impatient sigh! No mistaking that sigh by those who have studied grief: Whether in maid or man,

in young or old, in the gentle Sophy, so new to life, or in the haughty Darrell, weary of the world, and shrinking from its honors, that sigh had the same character, a like symptom of a malady in common; the same effort to free the heart from an oppressive load; the same token of a sharp and rankling remembrance lodged deep in that finest nerve-work of being, which no anodyne can reach—a pain that comes without apparent cause, and is sought to be expelled without conscious effort.

The old man feared at first that she might, by some means or other, in his absence, have become apprised of the brand on his own name, the verdict that had blackened his repute, the sentence that had hurled him from his native sphere; or that, as her reason had insensibly matured, she herself, reflecting on all the mystery that surrounded him—his incognitos, his hidings, the incongruity between his social grade and his education or bearing, and his repeated acknowledgments that there were charges against him which compelled him to concealment, and from which he could not be cleared on earth; that she, reflecting on all these evidences to his disfavor, had either secretly admitted into her breast a conviction of his guilt, or that, as she grew up to woman, she had felt, through him, the disgrace entailed upon herself. Or if such were not the cause of her sadness, had she learned more of her father's evil courses; had any emissary of Jasper's worked upon her sensibilities or her fears?

No, that could not be the case, since whatever the grounds upon which Jasper had conjectured that Sophy was with Lady Montfort, the accuracy of his conjectures had evidently been doubted by Jasper himself; or why so earnestly have questioned Waife? Had she learned that she was the grandchild and natural heiress of a man wealthy and renowned—a chief amongst the chiefs of England—who rejected her with disdain? Was she pining for her true position? or mortified by the contempt of a kinsman, whose rank so contrasted the vagrancy of the grandsire by whom alone she was acknowledged?

Tormented by these doubts, he was unable to solve them by such guarded and delicate questions as he addressed to Sophy herself. For she, when he faltering asked what ailed his darling, would start, brighten up for the moment, answer—"Nothing, now that he had come back;" kiss his forehead, play with Sir Isaac, and then manage furtively to glide away.

But the day before that in which we now see him alone, he had asked her abruptly, "If, during his absence, any one besides George Morley had visited at Lady Montfort's—any one whom she had seen?" And Sophy's cheek had as suddenly become crimson, then deadly pale; and first she said "no," and then "yes;" and after a pause, looking away from him, she added—"The young gentleman who—who helped us to buy Sir Isaac, he has visited Lady Montfort—related to some dear friend of hers."

"What, the painter!"

"No—the other, with the dark eyes."

"Haughton!" said Waife, with an expression of great pain in his face.

"Yes—Mr. Haughton; but he has not been here a long, long time. He will not come again, I believe."

Her voice quivered, despite herself, at the last words, and she began to bustle about the room—filled Waife's pipe, thrust it into his hands with a laugh, the false mirth of which went to his very heart, and then stepped from the open window into the little garden, and began to sing one of Waife's favorite simple old Border songs; but before she got through the first line, the song ceased, and she was as lost to sight as a ringdove, whose note comes and goes so quickly amongst the impenetrable converts.

But Waife had heard enough to justify profound alarm for Sophy's peace of mind, and to waken in his own heart some of its most painful associations. The reader, who knows the wrong inflicted on William Losely by Lionel Haughton's father—a wrong which had led to all poor Willy's subsequent misfortunes—may conceive that the very name of Haughton was wounding to his ear; and when, in his brief, sole and bitter interview with Darrell, the latter had dropped out that Lionel Haughton, however distant of kin, would be a more grateful heir than the grandchild of a convicted felon—if Willy's sweet nature *could* have admitted a momentary hate—it would have been for the thus vaunted son of the man who had stripped him of the modest all which would perhaps have saved his own child from the robber's guilt,

and himself from the robber's doom. Long since, therefore, the reader will have comprehended why, when Waife came to meet Sophy at the river-side, and learned at the inn on its margin that the name of her younger companion was Lionel Haughton—why, I say, he had so morosely parted from the boy, and so imperiously bade Sophy dismiss all thought of meeting "the young gentleman" again.

And now again this very Lionel Haughton to have stolen into the retreat in which poor Waife had deemed he left his treasure so secure! Was it for this he had fled from her? Did he return to find her youth blighted, her affections robbed from him, by the son of Charles Haughton? The father had despoiled his manhood of independence; must it be the son who despoiled his age of its only solace? Grant even that Lionel was worthy of Sophy—grant that she had been loyally wooed—must not that attachment be fruitless—be fatal? If Lionel were really now adopted by Darrell, Waife knew human nature too well to believe that Darrell would complacently hear Lionel ask a wife in her whose claim to his lineage had so galled and incensed him. It was while plunged in these torturing reflections that Lady Montfort (not many minutes after Sophy's song had ceased and her form vanished) had come to visit him, and he at once accosted her with agitated inquiries—"When had Mr. Haughton first presented himself?—how often had he seen Sophy?—what had passed between them?—did not Lady Montfort see that his darling's heart was breaking?"

But he stopped as suddenly as he had rushed into this thorny maze of questions; for, looking imploringly into Caroline Montfort's face, he saw there more settled signs of a breaking heart than Sophy had yet betrayed, despite her paleness and sighs. Sad, indeed, the change in her countenance since he had left the place months ago, though Waife, absorbed in Sophy, had not much remarked it till now, when seeking to read therein secrets that concerned his darling's welfare. Lady Montfort's beauty was so perfect in that rare harmony of feature which poets, before Byron, have compared to music, that sorrow could no more mar the effect of that beauty on the eye, than pathos can mar the effect of the music that admits it on the ear. But the change in her face seemed that of a sorrow which has lost all earthly hope. Waife, therefore, checked questions that took the tone of reproaches, and involuntarily murmured "Pardon."

Then Caroline Montfort told him all the tender projects she had conceived for his grandchild's happiness—how, finding Lionel so disinterested and noble, she had imagined she saw in him the providential agent to place Sophy in the position to which Waife had desired to raise her; Lionel to share with her the heritage of which he might otherwise despoil her—both to become the united source of joy and of pride to the childless man who now favored the one to exclude the other. Nor in these schemes had the absent wanderer been forgotten. No; could Sophy's virtues once be recognized by Darrell, and her alleged birth acknowledged by him—could the guardian who, in fostering those virtues to bloom by Darrell's hearth, had laid under the deepest obligations one who, if unforgiving to treachery, was grateful for the humblest service—could that guardian justify the belief in his innocence which George Morley had ever entertained, and, as it now proved, with reason—then where on all earth a man like Guy Darrell to vindicate William Losely's attainted honor, or from whom William might accept cherishing friendship and independent ease, with so indisputable a right to both!

Such had been the picture that the fond and sanguine imagination of Caroline Montfort had drawn from generous hope, and colored with tender fancies. But alas for such castles in the air! All had failed. She had only herself to blame. Instead of securing Sophy's welfare, she had endangered Sophy's happiness. They whom she had desired to unite were irrevocably separated. Bitterly she accused herself—her error in relying so much on Lionel's influence with Darrell—on her own early remembrance of Darrell's affectionate nature, and singular sympathies with the young—and thus suffering Lionel and Sophy to grow familiar with each other's winning characters, and carry on childlike romance into maturer sentiment. She spoke, though briefly, of her visit to Darrell, and its ill success—of the few letters that had passed since then between herself and Lionel, in which it was settled that he should seek no parting interview with Sophy.

He had declared to Sophy no formal suit—they had exchanged no lover's vows.

It would be, therefore, but a dishonoroble cruelty to her to say, "I come to tell you that I love you, and that we must part for ever." And how avow the reason—that reason that would humble her to the dust? Lionel was forbidden to wed with one whom Jasper Losely called daughter, and whom the guardian she so venerated believed to be his grandchild. All of comfort that Lady Montfort could suggest was, that Sophy was so young that she would conquer what might be but a girl's romantic sentiment—or, if a more serious attachment, one that no troth had cemented—for a person she might not see again for years; Lionel was negotiating exchange into a regiment on active service. "Meanwhile," said Lady Montfort, "I shall never wed again. I shall make it known that I look on your Sophy as the child of my adoption.

If I do not live to save sufficient for her out of an income that is more than thrice what I require, I have instructed mw lawyers to insure my life for her provision; it will be ample Many a wooer, captivating as Lionel, and free from the scruples that fetter his choice, will be proud to kneel at the feet of one so lovely. This rank of mine, which has never yet bestowed on me a joy, now becomes of value, since it will give dignity to—to Matilda's child, and—and to——"

Lady Montfort sobbed.

Waife listened respectfully, and for the time was comforted. Certainly, in his own heart he was glad that Lionel Haughton was permanently separated from Sophy. There was scarcely a man on earth, of fair station and repute, to whom he would have surrendered Sophy with so keen a pang as to Charles Haughton's son.

The poor young lovers! all the stars seemed against them! Was it not enough that Guy Darrell should be so obdurate! Must the mild William Losely be also a malefic in their horoscope?

But when, that same evening, the old man more observantly than ever watched his grandchild, his comfort vanished—misgivings came over him—he felt assured that the fatal shaft had been broken in the wound, and that the heart was bleeding inly.

True; not without prophetic insight had Arabella Crane said to the pining, but resolute, quiet child, behind the scenes of Mr. Rugge's show, "How much you will love one day." All that night Waife lay awake pondering—revolving—exhausting that wondrous fertility of resource which teemed in his inventive brain. In vain!

And now—(the day after this conversation with Lady Montfort, whose illnes grieves, but does not surprise him)—now as he sits and thinks, and gazes abstractedly into that far, pale, winter sky—now, the old man is still scheming how to reconcile a human loving heart to the eternal loss of that affection which has so many perishable counterfeits, but which, when true in all its elements—complete in all its varied wealth of feeling, is never to be forgotten and never to be replaced.

CHAPTER II.

An Offering to the Manes.

THREE sides of Waife's cottage were within Lady Montfort's grounds; the fourth side, with its more public entrance, bordered the lane. Now, as he thus sate, he was startled by a low timid ring at the door which opened on the lane. Who could it be?—not Jasper! He began to tremble. The ring was repeated. One woman-servant composed all his establishment. He heard her opening the door—heard a low voice; it seemed a soft, fresh, young voice. His room-door opened, and the woman, who of course knew the visitor by sight and name, having often remarked him on the grounds with Lady Montfort and Sophy, said, in a cheerful tone, as if bringing good news, "Mr. Lionel Haughton."

Scarcely was the door closed—scarcely the young man in the room, before, with all his delightful, passionate frankness, Lionel had clasped Waife's reluctant hand in both his own, and, with tears in his eyes, and choking in his voice, was pouring sentences so loosely knit together, that they seemed almost incoherent;—now a burst of congratulation—now a falter of condolence—now words that seemed to supplicate as for pardon to an offence of his own—rapid transitions from enthusiasm to pity

—from joy to grief—variable, with the stormy April of a young, fresh, hearty nature.

Taken so wholly by surprise, Waife, in vain attempting to appear cold and distant, and only very vaguely comprehending what the unwelcome visitor so confusedly expressed, at last found voice to interrupt the jet and gush of Lionel's impetuous emotions, and said as drily as he could, "I am really at loss to conceive the cause of what appears to be meant as congratulations to me and reproaches to yourself, Mr.—Mr. Haught—;" his lips could not complete the distasteful name.

"My name shocks you—no wonder," said Lionel, deeply mortified, and bowing down his head as he gently dropped the old man's hand. "Reproaches to myself!—Ah, sir, I am here as Charles Haughton's son!"

"What!" exclaimed Waife, "you know? How could you know that Charles Haughton—"

LIONEL (interrupting).—"I know. His own lips confessed his shame to have so injured you."

WAIFE.—"Confessed to whom?"

LIONEL.—"To Alban Morley. Believe me, my father's remorse was bitter; it dies not in his grave, it lives in me. I have so longed to meet with William Losely."

Waife seated himself in silence, shading his face with one hand while with the other he made a slight gesture, as if to discourage or rebuke farther allusion to ancient wrong. Lionel, in quick accents, but more connected meaning, went on—

"I have just come from Mr. Darrell, where I and Colonel Morley (here Lionel's countenance was darkly troubled) have been staying some days. Two days ago I received this letter from George Morley, forwarded to me from London. It says—let me read it—'You will rejoice to learn that our dear Waife'—pardon that name."

"I have no other—go on."

"'Is once more with his grandchild.'" (Here Lionel sighed heavily — sigh like Sophy's.) "'You will rejoice yet more to learn that it has pleased Heaven to allow me and another witness, who, some years ago, had been misled into condemning Waife, to be enabled to bear incontrovertible testimony to the complete innocence of my beloved friend; nay, more—I say to you most solemnly, that in all which appeared to attest guilt, there has been a virtue, which, if known to Mr. Darrell, would make him bow in reverence to that old man. Tell Mr. Darrell so from me; and add, that in saying it, I express my conviction of his own admiring sympathy for all that is noble and heroic.'"

"Too much—this is too, too much," stammered out Waife, restlessly turning away; "but—but, you are folding up the letter. That is all?—he does not say more?—he does not mention any one else?—eh?—eh?"

"No, sir; that is all."

"Thank Heaven! He is an honorable man! Yet he has said more than he ought—much more than he can prove, or than I"—He broke off, and abruptly asked, "How did Mr. Darrell take these assertions? With an incredulous laugh—eh?—'Why, the old rogue had pleaded guilty!'"

"Sir, Alban Morley was there to speak of the William Losely whom he had known; to explain, from facts which he had collected at the time, of what nature was the evidence *not* brought forward. The motive that induced you to plead guilty I had long guessed; it flashed in an instant on Guy Darrell; it was not mere guess with him! You ask me what he said? This: 'Grand nature! George is right! and I do bow my head in reverence!'"

"He said *that?*—Guy Darrell? On your honor, he said that?"

"Can you doubt it? Is he not a gentle man?"

Waife was fairly overcome.

"But, sir," resumed Lionel, "I must not conceal from you, that though George's letter and Alban Morley's communications sufficed to satisfy Darrell, without further question, your old friend was naturally anxious to learn a more full account, in the hope of legally substantiating your innocence. He therefore despatched by the telegraph a request to his nephew to come at once to Fawley. George arrived there yesterday. Do not blame him, sir, that we share his secret."

"You do? Good heavens! And that lawyer will be barbarous enough too; but no—he has an interest in not accusing of midnight robbery his daughter's husband; Jasper's secret is safe with him. And Colonel Morley—surely his cruel nephew will not suffer him

to make me—me, with one foot in the grave—a witness against my Lizzy's son!"

"Colonel Morley, at Darrell's suggestion, came with me to London; and if he does not accompany me to you, it is because he is even now busied in finding out your son, not to undo, but to complete the purpose of your self-sacrifice. 'All other considerations,' said Guy Darrell, 'must be merged in this one thought—that such a father shall not have been in vain a martyr.' Colonel Morley is empowered to treat with your son on any terms; but on this condition, that the rest of his life shall inflict no farther pain, no farther fear on you. This is the sole use to which, without your consent, we have presumed to put the secret we have learned. Do you pardon George now?"

Waife's lips murmured inaudibly, but his face grew very bright; and as it was raised upwards, Lionel's ear caught the whisper of a name—it was not Jasper, it was "Lizzy."

"Ah! why," said Lionel, sadly, and after a short pause, "why was I not permitted to be the one to attest your innocence—to clear your name? I, who owed to you so vast an hereditary debt! And now—dear, dear Mr. Losely—"

"Hush! Waife!—call me Waife still!—and always."

"Willingly! It is the name by which I have accustomed myself to love you. Now, listen to me. I am dishonored until at least the mere pecuniary debt, due to you from my father, is paid. Hist! hist!—Alban Morley says so—Darrell says so. Darrell says, 'he cannot own me as kinsman till that debt is cancelled.' Darrell lends me the means to do it; he would share his kinsman's ignominy if he did not. Before I could venture even to come hither, the sum due to you from my father was repaid. I hastened to town yesterday evening—saw Mr. Darrell's lawyer. I have taken a great liberty—I have invested this sum already in the purchase of an annuity for you. Mr. Darrell's lawyer had a client who was in immediate want of the sum due to you; and, not wishing permanently to burthen his estate by mortgage, would give a larger interest by way of annuity than the public offices would; excellent landed security. The lawyer said it would be a pity to let the opportunity slip, so I ventured to act for you. It was all settled this morning. The particulars are on this paper, which I will leave with you. Of course the sum due to you is not exactly the same as that which my father borrowed before I was born. There is the interest—compound interest; nothing more. I don't understand such matters; Darrell's lawyer made the calculation—it must be right."

Waife had taken the paper, glanced at its contents, dropped it in confusion, amaze. Those hundreds lent swelled into all those thousands returned! And all methodically computed — tersely—arithmetically—down to fractions. So that every farthing seemed, and indeed was, his lawful due. And that sum invested in an annuity of £500 a-year—income which, to poor Gentleman Waife, seemed a prince's revenue!

"It is quite a business-like computation, I tell you, sir; all done by a lawyer. It is indeed," cried Lionel, dismayed at Waife's look and gesture. "Compound interest *will* run up to what seems a large amount at first; every child knows that. You can't deny Cocker and calculating tables, and that sort of thing. William Losely, you cannot leave an eternal load of disgrace on the head of Charles Haughton's son."

"Poor Charlie Haughton," murmured Waife. "And I was feeling bitter against his memory—bitter against his son. How Heaven loves to teach us the injustice that dwells in anger! But—but—this cannot be. I thank Mr. Darrell humbly—I cannot take his money."

"It is not his money—it is mine; he only advances it to me. It costs him really nothing, for he deducts the £500 a-year from the allowance he makes me. And I don't want such an absurd allowance as I had before going out of the Guards into the line—I mean to be a soldier in good earnest. Too much pocket-money spoils a soldier—only gets one into scrapes. Alban Morley says the same. Darrell, too, says 'Right, no gold could buy a luxury like the payment of a father's debt!' You cannot grudge me that luxury—you dare not!—why? because you are an honest man."

"Softly, softly, softly," said Waife. "Let me look at you. Don't talk of money now—don't let us think of money! What a look of your father! 'Tis he, 'tis he whom I see before me! Charlie's sweet bright playful eyes

—that might have turned aside from the path of duty—a sheriff's officer! Ah! and Charlie's happy laugh, too, at the slightest joke! But *this* is not Charlie's—it is all you own (touching, with gentle finger, Lionel's broad truthful brow). Poor Charlie, he *was* grieved—you are right—I remember."

"Sir," said Lionel, who was now on one knee by Waife's chair—"sir, I have never yet asked man for his blessing—not even Guy Darrell. Will you put your hand on my head? and oh! that in the mystic world beyond us, some angel may tell Charles Haughton that William Losely has blessed his son!"

Solemnly, but with profound humility—one hand on the Bible beside him, one on the young soldier's bended head—William Losely blessed Charles Haughton's son—and, having done so, involuntarily his arms opened, and blessing was followed by embrace.

CHAPTER III.

Nothing so obstinate as a young man's hope; nothing so eloquent as a lover's tongue.

HITHERTO there had been no reference to Sophy. Not Sophy's lover, but Charles Haughton's son had knelt to Waife and received the old man's blessing. But Waife could not be long forgetful of his darling—nor his anxiety on her account. The expression in his varying face changed suddenly. Not half-an-hour before, Lionel Haughton was the last man in the world to whom willingly he would have consigned his grandchild. Now, of all men in the world Lionel Haughton would have been his choice. He sighed heavily; he comprehended, by his own changed feelings, how tender and profound an affection Lionel Haughton might inspire in a heart so fresh as Sophy's, and so tenacious of the impressions it received. But they were separated for ever; she ought not even again to see him. Uneasily Waife glanced towards the open window—rose involuntarily, closed it, and drew down the blind.

"You must go now, young gentleman," said he, almost churlishly.

The quick lover's sense in Lionel divined why the blind was drawn, and the dismissal so abruptly given.

"Give me your address," said Waife; "I will write about—that paper. Don't now stay longer—pray—pray."

"Do not fear, sir. I am not lingering here with the wish to see—*her!*"

Waife looked down.

"Before I asked the servant to announce me, I took the precaution to learn that you were alone. But a few words more—hear them patiently. Have you any proof that could satisfy Mr. Darrell's reason that your Sophy is his daughter's child?"

"I have Jasper's assurance that she is; and the copy of the nurse's attestation to the same effect. They satisfied me. I would not have asked Mr. Darrell to be as easily contented; I could but have asked him to to inquire, and satisfy himself. But he would not even hear me."

"He will hear you now, and with respect."

"He will!" cried Waife, joyously. "And if he should inquire, and if Sophy should prove to be, as I have ever believed, his daughter's child, would he not own, and receive, and cherish her?"

"Alas, sir, do not let me pain you; but that is not my hope. If, indeed, it should prove that your son deceived you—that Sophy is no way related to him—if she should be the child of peasants, but of honest peasants—why, sir, *that* is my hope, my last hope—for then I would kneel once more at your feet, and implore your permission to win her affection and ask her hand."

"What! Mr. Darrell would consent to your union with the child of peasants, and not with his own grandchild?"

"Sir, sir, you rack me to the heart; but if you knew all, you would not wonder to hear me say, 'I dare not ask Mr. Darrell to bless my union with the daughter of Jasper Losely.'"

Waife suppressed a groan, and began to pace the room with disordered steps.

"But," resumed Lionel, "go to Fawley yourself. Seek Darrell; compare the reasons for your belief with his for rejecting it. At this moment his pride is more subdued than I have ever known it. He will go calmly into the investigation of facts; the truth will become clear. Sir—dear, dear sir—I am not without a hope."

"A hope that the child I have so cherished should be nothing in the world to me!"

"Nothing to you! Is memory such a shadow?—Is affection such a weathercock?" Has the love between you and Sophy been only the instinct of kindred blood? Has it not been hallowed by all that makes Age and Childhood so pure a blessing to each other, rooted in trials born together? Were you not the first who taught her in wanderings, in privations, to see a Mother in Nature, and pray to a Father which is in Heaven? Would all this be blotted out of your souls if she were not the child of that son whom it chills you to remember? Sir, if there be no tie to replace the mere bond of kindred, why have you taken such vigilant pains to separate a child from him whom you believe to be her father?"

Waife stood motionless and voiceless. This passionate appeal struck him forcibly.

"And, sir," added Lionel in a a lower, sadder tone—"can I ask you, whose later life has been one sublime self-sacrifice, whether you would rather that you might call Sophy granchild, and know her wretched, than know her but as the infant angel whom Heaven sent to your side when bereaved and desolate, and know also that she was happy? Oh, William Losely, pray with me that Sophy may not be your grandchild. Her home will not be less your home—her attachment will not less replace to you your lost son—and on your knee her children may learn to lisp the same prayers that you taught to her. Go to Darrell—go—go! and take me with you!"

"I will—I will," exclaimed Waife; and snatching at his hat and staff—"Come—come! But Sophy should not learn that you have been here—that I have gone away with you; it might set her thinking, dreaming, hoping—all to end in greater sorrow." He bustled out of the room to caution the old woman, and to write a few hasty lines to Sophy herself—assuring her, on his most solemn honor, that he was not now flying from her to resume his vagrant life—that, without fail, please Heaven, he would return that night or the next day.

In a few minutes he reopened the room door, beconing silently to Lionel, and then stole into the quiet lane with quick steps.

CHAPTER IV.

Guy Darrell's views in the invitation to Waite.

LIONEL had but inadequately represented, for he could but imperfectly comprehend, the profound impression made upon Guy Darrell by George Morley's disclosures. Himself so capable of self-sacrifice, Darrell was the man above all others to regard with an admiring reverence, which partook of awe, a self-immolation that seemed almost above humanity—to him who set so lofty an estimate on good name and fair repute. He had not only willingly permitted, but even urged Lionel to repair to Waife, and persuade the old man to come to Fawley. With Waife he was prepared to enter into the full discussion of Sophy's alleged parentage. But apart even from considerations that touched a cause of perplexity which disquieted himself, Darrell was eager to see and to show homage to the sufferer, in whom he recognized a hero's dignity.

And if he had sent by Lionel no letter from himself to Waife, it was only because, in the exquisite delicacy of feeling that belonged to him, when his best emotions were aroused, he felt it just that the whole merit, and the whole delight of reparation to the wrongs of William Losely should, without direct interposition of his own, be left exclusively to Charles Haughton's son. Thus far it will be acknowledged that Guy Darrell was not one of those men who, once warmed to magnanimous impulse, are cooled by a thrifty prudence when action grows out of the impulse. Guy Darrell could not be generous by drachm and scruple. Not apt to say, "I apologize,"—slow to say, "I repent;" very—very—very slow indeed to say, "I forgive;" yet let him once say, "I repent," "I apologize," or "I forgive," and it was said with his whole heart and soul.

But it must not be supposed that, in authorizing Lionel to undertake the embassy to Waife, or in the anticipation of what might pass between Waife and himself should the former consent to revisit the old house from which he had been so scornfully driven, Darrell had altered, or dreamed of altering, one iota of his resolves against an union between Lionel and Sophy. True, Lionel had induced him to say, "Could it be indisputably proved that no drop of Jasper Losely's blood were in

this girl's veins—that she were the lawful child of honest parents, however humble—my right to stand between her and yourself would cease." But a lawyer's experience is less credulous than a lover's hope. And to Darrell's judgment it was wholly improbable that any honest parents, however humble, should have yielded their child to a knave like Jasper, while it was so probable that his own persuasion was well founded, and that she was Jasper's daughter, though not Matilda's.

The winter evening had closed. George and Darrell were conversing in the library; the theme, of couse, was Waife; and Darrell listened with vivid interest to George's graphic accounts of the old man's gentle playful humor —with its vague desultory under-currents of poetic fancy or subtle wisdom. But when George turned to speak of Sophy's endearing, lovely nature, and, though cautiously, to intimate an appeal on her behalf to Darrell's sense of duty, or susceptibility to kindly emotions, the proud man's brow became knit, and his stately air evinced displeasure. Fortunately, just at a moment when farther words might have led to a permanent coldness between men so disposed to esteem each other, they heard the sound of wheels on the frosty ground—the shrill bell at the porch-door.

CHAPTER V.

The vagabond received in the manor-house at Fawley.

VERY lamely, very feebly, declining Lionel's arm, but leaning heavily on his crutch-stick, Waife crossed the threshold of the manor-house. George sprang forward to welcome him. The old man looked on the preacher's face with a kind of wandering uncertainty in his eye, and George saw that his cheek was very much flushed. He limped on through the hall, still leaning on his staff, George and Lionel at either side. A pace or two, and there stood Darrell! Did he, the host, not spring forward to offer an arm, to extend a hand? No; such greeting in Darrell would have been but vulgar courtesy. As the old man's eye rested on him, the superb gentleman bowed low—bowed as we bow to kings!

They entered the library. Darrell made a sign to George and Lionel. They understood the sign, and left visitor and host alone.

Lionel drew George into the quaint old dining-hall. "I am very uneasy about our dear friend," he said, in agitated accents. "I fear that I have had too little consideration for his years and his sensitive nature, and that, what with the excitement of the conversation that passed between us, and the fatigue of the journey, his nerves have broken down. We were not half-way on the road, and as we had the railway carriage to ourselves, I was talking to him with imprudent earnestness, when he began to tremble all over, and went into an hysterical paroxysm of mingled tears and laughter. I wished to stop at the next station, but he was not long recovering, and insisted on coming on. Still, as we approached Fawley, after muttering to himself, as far as I could catch his words, incoherently, he sank into a heavy state of lethargy or stupor, resting his head on my shoulder. It was with difficulty I roused him when he entered the park."

"Poor old man," said George feelingly; "no doubt the quick succession of emotions through which he has lately passed has overcome him for the time. But the worst is now past. His interview with Darrell must cheer his heart and soothe his spirits; and that interview over, we must give him all repose and nursing. But tell me what passed between you —if he was very indignant that I could not suffer men like you and my uncle Alban and Guy Darrell, to believe him a pick-lock and a thief."

Lionel began his narrative, but had not proceeded far in it before Darrell's voice was heard shouting loud, and the library bell rang violently.

They hurried into the library, and Lionel's fears were verified. Waife was in strong convulsions; and as these gradually ceased, and he rested without struggle, half on the floor, half in Darrell's arms, he was evidently unconscious of all around him. His eye was open but fixed in a glassy stare. The servants thronged into the room; one was despatched instantly to summon the nearest medical practitioner. "Help me—George—Lionel," said Darrell, "to bear him up-stairs. Mills, light us." When they reached the landing-place, Mills asked, "Which room, sir?"

Darrell hesitated an instant, then his gray eye lit into his dark fire. "My father's room —he shall rest on my father's bed."

When the surgeon arrived, he declared Waife to be in imminent danger—pressure on the brain. He prescribed prompt and vigorous remedies, which had indeed before the surgeon's arrival suggested themselves to, and been partly commenced by, Darrell, who had gone through too many varieties of experience to be unversed in the rudiments of leechcraft. "If I were in my guest's state," asked Darrell of the practitioner, "what would you do?"

"Telegraph instantly for Dr. F——."

"Lionel—you hear? Take my own horse —he will carry you like the wind. Off to * * * *; it is the nearest telegraph station."

Darrell did not stir from Waife's bedside all that anxious night. Dr. F—— arrived at morning. He approved of all that had been done, but nevertheless altered the treatment; and after staying some hours, said to Darrell, "I am compelled to leave you for the present, nor could I be of use in staying. I have given all the aid in my power to Nature—we must leave the rest to Nature herself. That fever—those fierce throes and spasms — are but Nature's efforts to cast off the grasp of the enemy we do not see. It now depends on what degree of rallying power be left to the patient. Fortunately his frame is robust, yet not plethoric. Do you know his habits?"

"I know," answered George,—"most temperate, most innocent."

"Then, with constant care, minute attention to my directions, he may recover."

"If care and attention can save my guest's life, he shall not die," said Darrell.

The physician looked at the speaker's pale face and compressed lips. "But, Mr. Darrell, I must not have you on my hands too. You must not be out of your bed again to-night."

"Certainly not," said George. "I shall watch alone."

"No," cried Lionel, "that is my post too."

"Pooh!" said Darrell; "young men so far from Death, are not such watchful sentinels against his stroke as men of my years, who have seen him in all aspects; and, moreover, base indeed is the host who deserts his own guest's sick-chamber. Fear not for me, doctor; no man needs sleep less than I do."

Dr. F—— slid his hand on Darrell's pulse. "Irregular—quick; but what vitality! what power!—a young man's pulse. Mr. Darrell, many years for your country's service are yet in these lusty beats."

Darrell breathed his chronic sigh, and turning back to Waife's bedside, said to the doctor, "When will you come again?"

"The day after to-morrow."

When the doctor returned, Waife was out of immediate danger. Nature, fortified by the "temperate, innocent habits" which husband up her powers, had dislodged, at least for a time, her enemy; but the attack was followed by extreme debility. It was clear that for days, perhaps even weeks to come, the vagrant must remain a prisoner under Darrell's roof-tree.

Lionel had been too mindful of Sophy's anxiety to neglect writing to Lady Montfort the day after Waife's seizure. But he could not find the heart to state the old man's danger; and with the sanguine tendencies of his young nature, even when at the worst he clung to belief in the best. He refrained from any separate and private communication of Waife's state to Lady Montfort, lest the sadness it would not not fail to occasion her should be perceptible to Sophy, and lead her to divine the cause. So he contented himself with saying that Waife had accompanied him to Mr. Darrell's, and would be detained there treated with all kindness and honor for some days.

Sophy's mind was relieved by this intelligence, but it filled her with wonder and conjecture. That Waife, who had so pertinaciously refused to break bread as a guest under any man's roof-tree, should be for days receiving the hospitality of Lionel Haughton's wealthy and powerful kinsman, was indeed mysterious. But whatever brought Waife and Lionel thus in confidential intercourse, could not but renew yet more vividly the hopes she had been endeavoring of late to stifle. And combining together many desultory remembrances of words escaped unawares from Lionel, from Lady Montfort, from Waife himself, the truth (of which her native acutenets had before admitted glimpses) grew almost clear to her. Was not Mr. Darrell that relation to her iost mother upon whom she had claims not hitherto conceded? Lionel and Waife both with that relation now! Surely the clouds that had rested on her future were admitting the

sun through their opening rents—and she blushed as she caught its ray.

CHAPTER VI.

Individual concessions are like political; when you once begin, there is no saying where you will stop.

WAIFE'S first words on recovering consciousness were given to thoughts of Sophy. He had promised her to return, at farthest, the next day; she would be so uneasy—he must get up—he must go at once. When he found his strength would not suffer him to rise, he shed tears. It was only very gradually and at intervals that he became acquainted with the length and severity of his attack, or fully sensible that he was in Darrell's house; that that form, of which he had retained vague dreamy reminiscences, hanging over his pillow, wiping his brow, and soothing him with the sweetest tones of the sweet human voice—that that form, so genial, so brotherlike, was the man who had once commanded him not to sully with his presence a stainless home.

All that had passed within the last few days was finally made clear to him in a short, unwitnessed, touching conversation with his host; after which, however, he became gradually worse; his mind remaining clear, but extremely dejected; his bodily strength evidently sinking. Dr. F—— was again summoned in haste. That great physician was, as every great physician should be, a profound philosopher, though with a familiar ease of manner, and a light off-hand vein of talk, which made the philosophy less sensible to the taste than any other ingredient in his pharmacopœia. Turning everybody else out of the room, he examined his patient alone—sounded the old man's vital organs, with ear and with stethoscope—talked to him now on his feelings, now on the news of the day, and then stepped out to Darrell.

"Something on the heart, my dear sir; I can't get at it; perhaps you can. Take off that something, and the springs will react, and my patient will soon recover. All about him sound as a rock—but the heart; that has been horribly worried; something worries it now. His heart may be seen in his eye. Watch his eye; it is missing some face it is accustomed to see."

Darrell changed color. He stole back into Waife's room, and took the old man's hand. Waife returned the pressure, and said, "I was just praying for you—and—and—I am sinking fast. Do not let me die, sir, without wishing poor Sophy a last good-by!"

Darrell passed back to the landing-place, where George and Lionel were standing, while Dr. F——was snatching a hasty refreshment in the library before his return to town. Darrell laid his hand on Lionel's shoulder. "Lionel, you must go back to London with Dr. F——. I cannot keep you here longer. I want your room."

"Sir," said Lionel, aghast, "while Waife is still so ill! You cannot be thus unkind."

"Inconsiderate egotist! would you deprive the old man of a presence dearer to him than yours? George, you will go too, but *you* will return. You told me, yesterday, that your wife was in London for a few days; entreat her to accompany you hither; entreat her to bring with her the poor young lady whom my guest pines to see at his bedside—*the face that his eye misses.*"

CHAPTER VII.

Sophy, Darrell, and the Flute-player. Darrell prepares a surprise for Waife.

SOPHY is come. She has crossed that inexorable threshold. She is a guest in the house which rejects her as a daughter. She has been there some days. Waife revived at the first sight of her tender face. He has left his bed; can move for some hours a-day into an adjoining chamber, which has been hastily arranged for his private sitting-room; and can walk its floor with a step that grows daily firmer in the delight of leaning on Sophy's arm.

Since the girl's arrival, Darrell has relaxed his watch over the patient. He never now enters his guest's apartment without previous notice; and, by that incommunicable instinct which passes in households between one silent breast and another, as by a law equally strong to attract or repel—here drawing together, there keeping apart—though no rule in either case has been laid down; by virtue, I say, of that strange intelligence, Sophy is not in the

old man's room when Darrell enters. Rarely in the twenty-four hours do the host and the fair young guest encounter. But Darrell is a quick and keen observer. He has seen enough of Sophy to be sensible of her charm—to penetrate into her simple natural loveliness of Character—to feel a deep interest in her, and a still deeper pity for Lionel. Secluding himself as much as possible in his private room, or in his leafless woods, his reveries increase in gloom. Nothing unbends his moody brow like Fairthorn's flute or Fairthorn's familiar converse.

It has been said before that Fairthorn knew his secrets. Fairthorn had idolized Caroline Lyndsay. Fairthorn was the only being in the world to whom Guy Darrell could speak of Caroline Lyndsay—to whom he could own the unconquerable but unforgiving love which had twice driven him from the social world. Even to Fairthorn, of course, all could not be told. Darrell could not speak of the letter he had received at Malta, nor of Caroline's visit to him at Fawley; for to do so, even to Fairthorn, was like a treason to the *dignity* of the Beloved. And Guy Darrell might rail at her inconstancy—her heartlessness; but to boast that she had lowered herself by the proffers that were dictated by repentance, Guy Darrell could not do *that;*—he was a gentleman. Still there was much left to say. He could own that he thought she would now accept his hand; and when Fairthorn looked happy at that thought, and hinted at excuses for her former fickleness, it was a great relief to Darrell to fly into a rage; but if the flute-player meanly turned round and became himself Caroline's accuser, then poor Fairthorn was indeed frightened; for Darrell's trembling lip or melancholy manner overwhelmed the assailant with self-reproach, and sent him sidelong into one of his hidden coverts.

But at this moment Fairthorn was a support to him under other trials—Fairthorn, who respects as he does, as no one else ever can, the sanctity of the Darrell line—who would shrink like himself from the thought that the daughter of Jasper Losely, and in all probability not a daughter of Matilda Darrell, should ever be mistress of that ancestral hall, lowly and obscure and mouldering though it be—and that the child of a sharper, a thief, a midnight assassin, should carry on the lineage of knights and warriors in whose stainless scutcheons, on many a Gothic tomb or over the portals of ruined castles, was impaled the heraldry of Brides sprung from the loins of Lion Kings! Darrell, then, doing full justice to all Sophy's beauty and grace, purity and goodness, was more and more tortured by the conviction that she could never be wife to the man on whom, for want of all nearer kindred, would devolve the heritage of the Darrell name.

On the other hand, Sophy's feelings towards her host were almost equally painful and embittered. The tenderness and reverence that he had showed to her beloved grandfather, the affecting gratitude with which Waife spoke of him, necessarily deepened her prepossessions in his favor as Lionel's kinsman; and though she saw him so sparingly, still, when they did meet, she had no right to complain of his manner. It might be distant, taciturn; but it was gentle, courteous—the manner which might be expected, in a host of secluded habits, to a young guest from whose sympathies he was removed by years, but to whose comforts he was unobtrusively considerate—whose wishes were delicately forestalled.

Yet was this all that her imagination had dared to picture on entering those grey walls? Where was the evidence of the relationship to which she had dreamed?—where a single sign that she was more in that house than a mere guest?—where, alas! a token that even Lionel had named her to his kinsman, and that for Lionel's sake that kinsman bade her welcome? And Lionel too—gone the very day before she arrived! *That* she learned incidentally from the servant who showed her into her room. Gone, and not addressed a line to herself, though but to condole with her on her grandfather's illness, or congratulate her that the illness had spared her life! She felt wounded to the very core. As Waife's progressive restoration allowed her thoughts more to revert to so many causes for pain and perplexity, the mystery of all connected with her own and Waife's sojourn under that roof baffled her attempts at conjecture. The old man did not volunteer explanations. Timidly she questioned him; but his nerves yet were so unstrung, and her questions so evidently harassed him, that she only once made that attempt to

satisfy her own bewilderment, and smiled as if contented when he said, after a long pause, "Patience yet, my child; let me get a little stronger. You see Mr. Darrell will not suffer me to talk with him on matters that must be discussed with him before I go; and then—and then—Patience till then, Sophy."

Neither George nor his wife gave her any clue to the inquiries that preyed upon her mind. The latter, a kind, excellent woman meekly devoted to her husband, either was, or affected to be, in ignorance of the causes that had led Waife to Fawley, save very generally that Darrell had once wronged him by an erring judgment, and had hastened to efface that wrong. And then she kissed Sophy fondly, and told her that brighter days were in store for the old man and herself. George said with more authority — the authority of the priest—"Ask no questions. Time, that solves all riddles, is hurrying on, and Heaven directs its movements."

Her very heart was shut up, except where it could gush forth—nor even then with full tide—in letters to Lady Montfort. Caroline had heard from George's wife, with intense emotion, that Sophy was summoned to Darrell's house, the gravity of Waife's illness being considerately suppressed. Lady Montfort could but suppose that Darrell's convictions had been shaken—his resolutions softened; that he sought an excuse to see Sophy, and judge of her himself. Under this impression, in parting with her young charge, Caroline besought Sophy to write to her constantly, and frankly. Sophy felt an inexpressible relief in this correspondence. But Lady Montfort in her replies was not more communicative than Waife or the Morleys; only she seemed more thoughtfully anxious that Sophy should devote herself to the task of propitiating her host's affections. She urged her to try and break through his reserve—see more of him; as if that were possible! And her letters were more filled with questions about Darrell, than even with admonitions and soothings to Sophy.

The letters that arrived at Fawley were brought in a bag, which Darrell opened; but Sophy noticed that it was with a peculiar compression of lip, and a marked change of color, that he had noticed the handwriting on Lady Montfort's first letter to her, and that after that first time her letters were not enclosed in the bag, but came apart, and were never again given to her by her host.

Thus passed days in which Sophy's time was spent chiefly in Waife's sick-room. But now he is regaining strength hourly. To his sitting-room comes George frequently to relieve Sophy's watch. There, once a-day, comes Guy Darrell, and what then passed between the two men none witnessed. In these hours Waife insisted upon Sophy's going forth for air and exercise. She is glad to steal out alone —steal down by the banks of the calm lake, or into the gloom of the mournful woods. Here she not unfrequently encounters Fairthorn, who, having taken more than ever to the flute, is driven more than ever to outdoor rambles, for he has been cautioned not to indulge in his melodious resource within doors lest he disturb the patient.

Fairthorn and Sophy thus made acquaintance, distant and shy at first on both sides; but it gradually became more frank and cordial. Fairthorn had an object not altogether friendly in encouraging this intimacy. He thought, poor man, that he should be enabled to extract from Sophy some revelations of her early life, which would elucidate, not in favor of her asserted claims, the mystery that hung upon her parentage. But had Dick Fairthorn been the astutest of diplomatists, in this hope he would have been equally disappointed. Sophy had nothing to communicate. Her ingenuousness uttterly baffled the poor flute-player, Out of an innocent, unconscious kind of spite, on ceasing to pry into Sophy's decent, he began to enlarge upon the dignity of Darrell's. He inflicted on her the long-winded genealogical memoir, the recital of which had, on a previous occasion, so nearly driven Lionel Haughton from Fawley. He took her to see the antiquary's grave; he spoke to her, as they stood there, of Darrell's ambitious boyhood—his arid, laborious manhood—his determination to restore the fallen line—the very vow he had made to the father he had so pityingly revered. He sought to impress on her the consciousness that she was the guest of one who belonged to a race with whom spotless honor was the all in all; and who had gone through life with bitter sorrows, but reverencing that race, and vindicating that honor; Fairthorn's voice would tremble—his

eyes flashed on her while he talked. She, poor child, could not divine why; but she felt that he was angry with her—*speaking at her.*

In fact, Fairthorn's prickly tongue was on the barbed point of exclaiming, "And how dare you foist yourself into this unsullied lineage—how dare you think that the dead would not turn in their graves, ere they would make room in the vault of the Darrells for the daughter of a Jasper Losely!" But though she could not conceive the musician's covert meaning in these heraldic discourses, Sophy, with a justness of discrimination that must have been intuitive, separated from the more fantastic declamations of the grotesque genealogist that which was genuine and pathetic in the single image of the last decendant in a long and gradually-falling race, lifting it up once more into power and note on toiling shoulders, and standing on the verge of age, with the melancholy consciousness that the effort was successful only for his fleeting life; that, with all his gold, with all his fame, the hope which had achieved alike the gold and the fame was a lying mockery, and that name and race would perish with himself, when the earth yawned for him beside the antiquary's grave. And these recitals made her conceive a more soft and tender interest in Guy Darrell than she had before admitted; they accounted for the mournfulness on his brow; they lessened her involuntarily awe of that stateliness of bearing, which before had only chilled her as the evidence of pride.

While Fairthorn and Sophy thus matured acquaintance, Darrell and Waife were drawing closer and closer to each other. Certainly no one would be predisposed to suspect any congeniality of taste, intellect, experience, or emotion, between two men whose lives had been so widely different—in whose faults or merits the ordinary observer would have seen nothing but antagonism and contrast. Unquestionably their characters were strikingly dissimilar, yet there was that in each which the other recognized as familiar to his own nature. Each had been the victim of his heart; each had passed over the ploughshare of self-sacrifice. Darrell had offered up his youth—Waife his age; —Darrell to a Father and the unrequiting Dead—Waife to a Son whose life had become his terror. To one man, NAME had been an idol; to the other, NAME had been a weed cast away into the mire. To the one man, unjoyous, evanescent glory—to the other, a shame that had been borne with a sportive cheerfulness, dashed into sorrow only when the world's contumely threatened to despoil Affection of its food. But there was something akin in their joint experience of earthly vanities;—so little solace in worldly honors to the triumphant Orator—so little of misery to the vagrant Mime while his conscience mutely appealed to Heaven from the verdict of his kind.

And as beneath all the levity and whim of the man reared and matured, and fitted by his characteristic tendencies, to view life through its humors, not through its passions, there still ran a deep under-current of grave and earnest intellect and feeling—so too, amidst the severer and statelier texture of the once ambitious, laborious mind, which had conducted Darrell to renown—amidst all that gathered-up intensity of passion, which admitted no comedy into Sorrow, and saw in Love but the aspect of Fate—amidst all this lofty seriousness of soul, there was yet a vivid capacity of enjoyment—those fine sensibilities to the pleasurable sunrays of life, which are constitutional to all GENIUS, no matter how grave its vocations. True, affliction at last may dull them, as it dulls all else that we took from Nature when she equipped us for life. Yet, in the mind of Darrell, affliction had shattered the things most gravely coveted, even more than it had marred its perceptive acknowledgment of the sympathies between fancies that move to smiles, and thoughts that bequeath solemn lessons, or melt to no idle tears. Had Darrell been placed amidst the circumstanees that make happy the homes of earnest men, Darrell would have been mirthful; had Waife been placed amongst the circumstances that concentrate talent, and hedge round life with trained thicksets and belting laurels, Waife would have been grave.

It was not in the earlier conferences that took place in Waife's apartment that the subject which had led the old man to Fawley was brought into discussion. When Waife had sought to introduce it—when, after Sophy's arrival, he had looked wistfully into Darrell's face, striving to read there the impression she had created, and, unable to discover, had begun, with tremulous accents, to reopen the cause that weighed on him—Darrell stopped

him at once. "Hush—not yet; remember that it was in the very moment you first broached this sorrowful topic, on arriving here, and perceived how different the point of view from which we two must regard it, that your nerves gave way—your illness rushed on you. Wait, not only till you are stronger, but till we know each other better. This subject is one that it becomes us to treat with all the strength of our reason—with all the calm which either can impose upon the feelings that ruffle judgment. At present, talk we of all matters except that, which I promise you shall be fairly discussed at last."

Darrell found, however, that his most effective diversion from the subject connected with Sophy was through another channel in the old man's affections, hopes, and fears. George Morley, in repeating the conversation he had overheard between Waife and Jasper, had naturally, while clearing the father, somewhat softened the bravado and cynicism of the son's language, and more than somewhat brightened the touches of natural feeling by which the bravado and cynicism had been alternated. And Darrell had sufficient magnanimity to conquer the repugnance with which he approached a name associated with so many dark and hateful memories, and, avoiding as much as possible distinct reference to Jasper's past life, to court a consultation on the chances of saving from the worst the life that yet remained. With whom else, indeed, than Jasper's father could Darrell so properly and so unreservedly discuss a matter in which their interest and their fear were in common?—As though he were rendering some compensation to Waife for the disappointment he would experience when Sophy's claims came to be discussed—if he could assist in relieving the old man's mind as to the ultimate fate of the son for whom he had made so grand a sacrifice, Darrell spoke to Waife somewhat in detail of the views with which he had instructed Colonel Morley to find out and to treat with Jasper. He heard from the Colonel almost daily. Alban had not yet discovered Jasper, nor even succeeded in tracing Mrs. Crane? But an account of Jasper's wild farewell visit to that den of thieves, from which he had issued safe and triumphant, had reached the ears of a detective employed by the Colonel, and on tolerably good terms with Cutts; and it was no small comfort to know that Jasper had finally broken with those miscreant comrades, and had never again been seen in their haunts.

As Arabella had introduced herself to Alban by her former name, and neither he nor Darrell was acquainted with that she now bore, and as no questions on the subject could be put to Waife during the earlier stages of his illness, so it was several days before the Colonel had succeeded in tracing her out as Mrs. Crane of Podden Place—a discovery effected by a distant relation to whom he had been referred at the famous school of which Arabella had been the pride, and who was no doubt the owner of those sheepskin account-books by which the poor grim woman had once vainly sought to bribe Jasper into honest work. But the house in Podden Place was shut up—not a soul in charge of it. The houses immediately adjoining it were tenantless. The Colonel learned, however, from a female servant in an opposite house, that several days ago she had seen a tall, powerful-looking man enter Mrs. Crane's street-door; that she had not seen him quit it; that some evenings afterwards, as this servant was closing up the house in which she served, she had remarked a large private carriage driving away from Mrs. Crane's door; that it was too dark to see who were in the carriage, but she had noticed a woman whom she felt fully sure was Mrs. Crane's servant, Bridgett Greggs, on the box beside the coachman.

Alban had been to the agent employed by Mrs. Crane in the letting of her houses, but but had not there gained any information. The Colonel believed that Mrs. Crane had succeeded in removing Jasper from London—had, perhaps, accompanied him abroad. If with her, at all events for the present he was safe from the stings of want, and with one who had sworn to save him from his own guilty self. If, however, still in England, Alban had no doubt, sooner or later, to hunt him up.

Upon the whole, this conjectural information, though unsatisfactory, allayed much anxiety. Darrell made the most of it in his representations to waife. And the old man, as we know, was one not hard to comfort, never quarrelling irrevocably with Hope.

And now Waife is rapidly recovering. Darrell, after spending the greater part of several

days, intent upon a kind of study from which he had been estranged for many years, takes to frequent absences for the whole days; goes up to London by the earliest train, comes back by the latest. George Morley also goes to London for a few hours. Darrell, on returning, does not allude to the business which took him to the metropolis; neither does George, but the latter seems unusually animated and excited. At length, after one of these excursions, so foreign to his habits, he and George enter together the old man's apartment not long before the early hour at which the convalescent retires to rest. Sophy was seated on the footstool at Waife's knee, reading the Bible to him, his hand resting lightly on her bended head. The sight touched both George and Darrell; but Darrell of the two was the more affected. What young, pure voice shall read to *him* the Book of Hope in the evening of lonely age? Sophy started in some confusion, and as, in quitting the room, she passed by Darrell, he took her hand gently, and scanned her features more deliberately, more earnestly than he had ever yet seemed to do; then he sighed, and dropped the hand, murmuring, "pardon me." Was he seeeking to read in that fair face some likeness to the Darrell lineaments? If he had found it, what then? But when Sophy was gone, Darrell came straight to waife with a cheerful brow—with a kindling eye.

"William Losely," said he.

"Waife, if you please, sir," interrupted the old man.

"William Losely," repeated Darrell, "justice seeks to repair, so far as, alas! it now can, the wrongs inflicted on the name of William Losely. Your old friend Alban Morley supplying me with the notes he had made in the matter of your trial, I arranged the evidence they furnished. The Secretary for the home Department is one of my most intimate political friends—a man of humanity—of sense. I placed that evidence before him. I, George, and Mr. Hartopp, saw him after he had perused it——"

"My—son—Lizzy's son!"

"His secret will be kept. The question was not who committed the act for which you suffered, but whether *you* were clearly, incontestably, innocent of the act, and in pleading guilty, did but sublimely bear the penalty of another. There will be no new trial—there are none who would prosecute. I bring back to you the Queen's free pardon under the Great Seal. I should explain to you that this form of the royal grace is so rarely given that it needed all the strength and affecting circumstance of your peculiar case to justify the Home Secretary in listening, not only to the interest I could bring to bear in your favor, but to his own humane inclinations. The pardon under the Great Seal differs from an ordinary pardon. It purges the blood from the taint of felony—it remits all the civil disabilities which the mere expiry of a penal sentence does not remove.

In short, as applicable to your case, it becomes virtually a complete and formal attestation of your innocence. Alban Morley will take care to apprise those of your old friends who may yet survive, of that revocation of unjust obloquy, which this royal deed implies—Alban Morley, who would turn his back on the highest noble in Britain if but guilty of some jockey trick on the turf! Live henceforth openly, and in broad daylight if you please; and trust to us three—the Soldier the Lawyer, the Churchman—to give to this paper that value which your Sovereign's advisers intend it to receive."

"Your hand now, dear old friend!" cried George. "You remember I commanded you once to take mine as man and gentleman—as man and gentleman, now honor me with yours."

"Is it possible?" faltered Waife, one hand in George's, the other extended in imploring appeal to Darrell—"is it possible? I vindicated—I cleared—and yet no felon's dock for Jasper!—the son not criminated by the father's acquittal! Tell me that! again—again!"

"It is so, believe me. All that rests is to force on that son, if he have a human heart, the conviction that he will be worse than a parricide if he will not save himself."

"And he will—he shall. Oh, that I could but get at him," exclaimed the preacher.

"And now," said Darrell—"now, George, leave us; for now, upon equal terms, we two fathers can discuss family differences."

CHAPTER VIII.

Sophy's claim examined and canvassed.

"I TAKE this moment," said Darrell, when left alone with Waife—(ah, reader, let *us* keep to that familiar name to the last!)—"I take this moment," said Darrell, "the first moment in which you can feel thoroughly assured that no prejudice againgt yourself clouds my judgment in reference to her whom you believe to be your grandchild, to commence, and I trust to conclude for ever, the subject which twice brought you within these walls. On the night of your recent arrival here, you gave me this copy of a Frenchwoman's declaration, to the effect that two infants had been placed out with her to nurse; that one of them was my poor daughter's infant, who was about to be taken away from her; that the other was confided to her by its parent, a French lady, whom she speaks of as a very liberal and distinguished person, but whose name is not stated in the paper."

WAIFE.—"The confession describes that lady as an *artiste;* distinguished *artiste* is the expression—viz. a professional person—a painter—an actress—a singer—or—"

DARRELL (drily).—"An opera-dancer! I understand the French word perfectly. And I presume the name is not mentioned in the document, from motives of delicacy; the child of a distinguished French *artiste* is not necessarily born in wedlock. But this lady was very grateful to the nurse for the care shown to her infant, who was very sickly; and promised to take the nurse, and the nurse's husband also, into her service. The nurse states that she herself was very poor; that the lady's offer appeared to her like a permanent provision; that the life of this *artiste's* infant was of the utmost value to her—the life of my poor daughter's child of comparative insignificance. But the infant of the *artiste* died, and the nurse's husband put it into his wife's head to tell your son (then a widower, and who had seen so little of his child as to be easily deceived), that it was his infant who died. The nurse shortly afterwards removed to Paris, taking with her to the *artiste's* house the child who in reality was my daughter's."

"It seems very probable, does it not—does it not?" said the ex-comedian eagerly.

"It seems to me," replied the ex-lawyer, "very probable that a witness, entering into court with the confession of one villanous falsehood, would have little scruple to tell another. But I proceed. This rich and liberal *artiste* dies; the nurse's conscience then suddenly awakens—she sees Mr. Hammond—she informs him of the fraud she has practiced. A lady of rank, who had known Matilda, and had seen both the infants when both were living under the nurse's charge, and observed them more attentively than your son had done—corroborates the woman's story, stating that the *artiste*'s child had dark eyes instead of blue; that the *artiste* herself was never deceived—but, having taken a great fancy to the spurious infant, was willing to receive and cherish it as her own; and that she knows several persons who will depose that they heard the *artiste* say that the child was not her own. On this evidence your son takes to himself this child—and this child is your Sophy—and you wish me to acknowledge her as my daughter's offspring. Do not look me so earnestly in the face, my dear and respected guest. It was when you read in my face, what my lips shrank from uttering, that your emotions overcame your strength, and your very mind deserted you. Now, be firmer. Your Sophy has no need of me—she is under your charge, and your name is cleared. She has found a friend—a protectress—in her own sex. Lady Montfort's rank gives to her a position in the world as high as I could offer; and as to mere pecuniary provision for her, make your mind easy—it shall be secured. But bear with me when I add, resolutely and calmly, that this nurse's attestation is to me a grosser and poorer attempt at imposture than I had anticipated; and I am amazed that a man of your abilities should have been contented to accept it."

"Oh, Mr. Darrell, don't say so! It was such a blessing to think, when my son was lost to me, that I might fill up the void in my heart with an innocent, loving child. Don't talk of my abilities. If you, whose abilities none can question—if you had longed and yearned for such a comforter—if you had wished—if you wished now this tale to be true, you would have believed it too; you would believe it now—you would indeed. Two men look so differently at the same story—one deeply interested that it

should be true—one determined, if possible, to find it false. Is it not so?"

Darrell smiled slightly, but could not be induced to assent even to so general a proposition. He felt as if he were pitted against a counsel who would take advantage of every concession.

Waife continued. "And whatever seems most improbable in this confession, is rendered probable at once—if—if—we may assume that my unhappy son, tempted by the desire to—to—"

"Spare yourself—I understand—if your son wished to obtain his wife's fortune, and therefore connived at the exchange of the infants, and was therefore, too, enabled always to corroborate the story of the exchange whenever it suited him to reclaim the infant, I grant this—and I grant that the conjecture is sufficiently plausible to justify you in attaching to it much weight. We will allow that it was his interest at one time to represent his child, though living, as no more; but you must allow also that he would have deemed it his interest, later, to fasten upon me, as my daughter's, a child to whom she never gave birth. Here we entangle ourselves in a controversy without data, without facts. Let us close it. Believe what you please. Why should I shake convictions that render you happy? Be equally forbearing with me. I do full justice to your Sophy's charming qualities. In herself, the proudest parent might rejoice to own her; but I cannot acknowledge her to be the daughter of Matilda Darrell. And the story that assured you she was your grandchild, still more convinces me that she is not mine!"

"But be not thus inflexible, I implore you;—you can be so kind, so gentle;—she would be such a blessing to you—later—perhaps—when I am dead. I am pleading for your sake—I owe you so much! I should repay you, if I could but induce you to inquire—and if inquiry should prove that I am right."

"I have inquired sufficiently."

"Then I'll go and find out the nurse. I'll question her. I'll—"

"Hold. Be persuaded! Hug your belief! Inquire no farther!"

"Why—why?"

Darrell was mute.

Waife passed and repassed his hand over his brow, and then cried suddenly,—"But if I could prove her not to be my grandchild, then she might be happy!—then—then—ah, sir, young Haughton tells me that if she were but the daughter of honest parents—no child of Jasper's, no grandchild of mine—then you might not be too proud to bless her at least as his bride! And, sir, the poor child loves the young man. How could she help it? And, at her age, life without hope is either very short, or very, very long! Let me inquire! I should be happy even to know that she was not my grandchild. I should not love her less; and then she would have others to love her when I am gone to Lizzy!"

Darrell was deeply moved. To him there was something in this old man—ever forgetting himself, ever so hurried on by his heart—something, I say, in this old man, before which Darrel felt his intellect subdued, and his pride silenced and abashed.

"Yes, sir," said Waife, musingly, "so let it be. I am well now. I will go to France tomorrow."

Darrell nerved his courage. He had wished to spare Waife the pain which his own persuasions caused to himself. Better now be frank. He laid his hand on Waife's shoulder, and, looking him in the face, said solemnly,—"I entreat you not! Do you suppose that I would not resume inquiry in person, nor pause till the truth were made amply clear, if I had not strong reason to prefer doubt to certainty?"

"What do you mean, sir?"

"There is a woman whose career is, I believe, at this moment revived into fresh notoriety as the heroine of some drama on the stage of Paris—a woman who, when years paled her fame and reft her spoils, as a courtesan renowned for the fools she had beggared, for the young hearts she had corrupted, sought plunder still by crimes, to which law is less lenient: Charged with swindling, with fraud, with forgery, and at last more than suspected as a practised poisoner, she escaped by suicide the judgment of human tribunals."

"I know of whom you speak—that dreadful Gabrielle Desmarets, but for whom my sacrifice to Jasper's future might not have been in vain! It was to save Sophy from the chance of Jasper's ever placing her within reach of that woman's example that I took her away."

"Is is not, then, better to forbear asking who were your Sophy's parents, than to learn

from inquiry that she is indeed your grandchild, and that her mother was Gabrielle Desmarets?"

Waife uttered a cry like a shriek, and then sate voiceless and aghast. At last he exclaimed, "I am certain it is not so! Did you ever see that woman!"

"Never that I know of; but George tells me that he heard your son state to you that she had made acquaintance with me under another name, and if there was a design to employ her in conformation of his tale—if he was then speaking truth to you, doubtless this was the lady of rank referred to in the nurse's confession—doubtless this was the woman once palmed upon me as Matilda's *confidante*. In that case I have seen her. What then?"

"Mother was not written on her face! She could never have been a mother. Oh, you may smile, sir; but all my life I have been a reader of the human face; and there is in the aspect of some women the barrenness as of stone—no mother's throb in their bosom—no mother's kiss on their lips."

"I am a poor reader of women's faces," said Darrell; "but she must be very unlike women in general, who allows you to know her a bit better if you stood reading her face till doomsday. Besides, at the time you saw Gabrielle Desmarets, her mode of life had perhaps given to her an aspect not originally in her countenance. And I can only answer your poetic conceit by a poetic illustration—Niobe turned to stone; but she had a great many daughters before she petrified. Pardon me, if I would turn off by a jest a thought that I see would shock you, as myself, if gravely encouraged. Encourage it not. Let us suppose it only a chance that inquiry might confirm this conjecture; but let us shun that chance. Meanwhile, if inquiry is to be made, one more likely than either of us to get at the truth has promised to make it, and sooner or later we may learn from her the results—I mean that ill-fated Arabella Fossett, whom you knew as Crane."

Waife was silent; but he kept turning in his hand, almost disconsolately, the document which assoiled him from the felon's taint, and said at length, as Darrell was about to leave, "And this thing is of no use to *her*, then?"

Darrell came back to the old man's chair, and said softly, "Friend, do not fancy that the young have only one path to happiness. You grieve that I cannot consent to Lionel's marriage with your Sophy. Dismiss from your mind the desire for the Impossible. Gently wean from hers what is but a girl's first fancy."

"It is a girl's first love."

"And if it be," said Darrell, calmly, "no complaint more sure to yield to change of air. I have known a girl as affectionate, as pure, as full of all womanly virtues, as your Sophy (and I can give her no higher praise)—loved more deeply than Lionel *can* love; professing, doubtless at the time believing, that she also loved for life; betrothed too; faith solemnized by promise; yet in less than a year she was another's wife. Change of air, change of heart! I do not underrate the effect which a young man, so winning as Lionel, would naturally produce on the fancy or the feelings of a girl, who as yet, too, has seen no others; but impressions in youth are characters in the sand. Grave them ever so deeply, the tide rolls over them; and when the ebb shows the surface again, the characters are gone, for the sands are shifted. Courage! Lady Montfort will present to her others with forms as fair as Lionel's, and as elegantly dressed. With so much in her own favor, there are young patricians enough who will care not a rush what her birth;—young lords—Lady Montfort knows well how fascinating young lords can be! Courage—before a year is out, you will find new characters written on the sand."

"You don't know Sophy, sir," said Waife, simply; "and I see you are resolved not to know her. But you say Arabella Crane is to inquire; and should the inquiry prove that she is no child of Gabrielle Desmarets—that she is either your own grandchild or not mine—that—"

"Let me interrupt you. If there be a thing in the world that is cruel and treacherous, it is a false hope! Crush out of every longing thought the belief that this poor girl can prove to be one whom, with my consent, my kinsman can woo to be his wife. Lionel Haughton is the sole kinsman left to whom I can bequeath this roof-tree—these acres, hallowed to me because associated with my earliest lessons in honor and with the dreams which directed my life. He must take with the heritage the name it represents. In his children, that name of Darrell can alone live still in the

land. I say to you, that even were my daughter now in existence, she would not succeed me—she would not inherit nor transmit that name. Why?—not because I am incapable of a Christian's forgiveness, but because I am not capable of a gentleman's treason to his ancestors and himself;—because Matilda Darrell was false and perfidious;—because she was dead to honor, and therefore her birthright to a heritage of honor was irrevocably forfeited. And since you compel me to speak rudely, while in you I revere a man above the power of law to degrade—while, could we pass a generation, and Sophy were your child by your Lizzy, I should proudly welcome an alliance that made you and me as brothers—yet I cannot contemplate—it is beyond my power—I cannot contemplate the picture of Jasper Losely's daughter, even by my own child, the Mistress in my father's home—the bearer of my father's name. 'Tis in vain to argue. Grant me the slave of a prejudice—grant these ideas to be antiquated bigotry—I am too old to change. I ask from others no sacrifice which I have not borne. And whatever be Lionel's grief at my resolve, grief will be my companion long after he has forgotten that he mourned."

CHAPTER IX.

Poor Sophy!

THE next morning Mills, in giving Sophy a letter from Lady Montfort, gave her also one for Waife, and she recognized Lionel Haughton's hand-writing on the address. She went straight to Waife's sitting-room, for the old man had now resumed his early habits, and was up and dressed. She placed the letter in his hands without a word, and stood by his side while he opened it, with a certain still firmness in the expression of her face, as if she were making up her mind to some great effort. The letter was ostensibly one of congratulation. Lionel had seen Darrell the day before, after the latter had left the Home Secretary's office, and had learned that all which Justice could do to repair the wrong inflicted had been done.

Here Lionel's words, though brief, were cordial, and almost joyous; but then came a few sentences steeped in gloom. There was an allusion, vague and delicate in itself, to the eventful conversation with Waife in reference to Sophy—a sombre, solemn farewell conveyed to her and to hope—a passionate prayer for her happiness—and then an abrupt wrench, as it were, away from a subject too intolerably painful to prolong—an intimation that he had succeeded in exchanging into a regiment very shortly to be sent into active service; that he should set out the next day to join that regiment in distant part of the country; and that he trusted, should his life be spared by war, that it would be many years before he should revisit England. The sense of the letter was the more affecting in what was concealed than in what was expressed. Evidently Lionel desired to convey to Waife, and leave it to him to inform Sophy, that she was henceforth to regard the writer as vanished out of her existence—departed, as irrevocably as depart the Dead

While Waife was reading, he had turned himseif aside from Sophy; he had risen—he had gone to the deep recess of the old mullioned window, half screenlng himself beside the curtain. Noiselessly, Sophy followed; and when he had closed the letter, she laid her hand on his arm, and said very quietly, "Grandfather, may I read that letter?"

Waife was startled, and replied on the instant, "No, my dear."

"It is better that I should," said she, with the same quiet firmness; and then seeing the distress in his face, she added, with her more accustomed sweet docility, yet with a forlorn droop of the head—"But as you please, grandfather."

Waife hesitated an instant. Was she not right?—would it not be better to show the letter? After all, she must confront the fact that Lionel could be nothing to her henceforth; and would not Lionel's own words wound her less than all Waife could say? So he put the letter into her hands, and sate down, watching her countenance.

At the opening sentences of congratulation, she looked up inquiringly. Poor man, he had not spoken to her of what at another time it would have been such joy to speak; and he now, in answer to her look, said almost sadiy, "Only about *me*, Sophy; what does that matter?" But before the girl read a line

farther, she smiled on him, and tenderly kissed his furrowed brow.

"Don't read on, Sophy," said he quickly. She shook her head and resumed. His eye still upon her face, he marked it changing as the sense of the letter grew upon her, till, as, without a word, with scarce a visible heave of the bosom, she laid the letter on his knees, the change as had become so complete, that it seemed as if ANOTHER stood in her place. In very young and sensitive persons, especially female (though I have seen it even in our hard sex), a great and sudden shock or revulsion of feeling reveals itself thus in the almost preternatural alteration of the countenance. It is not a mere paleness—a skin-deep loss of color; it is as if the whole bloom of youth had rushed away; hollows, never discernible before, appear in the cheek that was so round and smooth; the muscles fall as in mortal illness; a havoc, as of years, seems to have been wrought in a moment; Flame itself does not so suddenly ravage—so suddenly alter—leave behind it so ineffable an air of desolation and ruin. Waife sprang forward and clasped her to his breast.

"You will bear it, Sophy! The worst is over now. Fortitude, my child!—fortitude! The human heart is wonderfully sustained when it is not the conscience that weighs it down—griefs, that we think at the moment must kill us, wear themselves away. I speak the truth, for I too have suffered!"

"Poor grandfather!" said Sophy, gently; and she said no more. But when he would have continued to speak comfort, or exhort to patience, she pressed his hand tightly, and laid her finger on her lip. He was hushed in an instant.

Presently she began to move about the room, busying herself, as usual, in those slight, scarce perceptible arrangements by which she loved to think that she ministered to the old man's simple comforts. She placed the arm-chair in his favorite nook by the window, and before it the footstool for the poor lame foot; and drew the table near the chair, and looked over the books that George had selected for his perusal from Darrell's library; and chose the volume in which he saw his mark, to place nearest to his hand, and tenderly cleared the mist from his reading-glass; and removed one or two withered or ailing snowdrops from the little winter nosegay she had gathered for him the day before—he watching her all the time, silent as herself, not daring, indeed, to speak, lest his heart should overflow.

These little tasks of love over, she came towards him a few paces, and said—"Please, dear grandfather, tell me all about what has happened to yourself, which should make us glad—that is, by-and-by; but nothing as to the rest of that letter. I will just think over it by myself; but never let us talk of it, grandy, dear, never more—never more."

CHAPTER X.

Trees that, like the poplar, lift upward all their boughs, give no shade and no shelter, whatever their height. Trees the most lovingly shelter and shade us, when, like the willow, the higher soar their summits, the lowlier droop their boughs.

USUALLY when Sophy left Waife in the morning, she would wander out into the grounds, and he could see her pass before his window; or she would look into the library, which was almost exclusively given up to the Morleys, and he could hear her tread on the old creaking stairs. But now she had stolen into her own room, which communinated with his sitting-room—a small lobby alone intervening—and there she remained so long, that he grew uneasy. He crept softly to her door and listened. He had a fineness of hearing almost equal to his son's; but he could not hear a sob—not a breath. At length he softly opened the door, and looked in with caution.

The girl was seated at the foot of the bed, quite still—her eyes fixed on the ground, and her finger to her lip, just as she had placed it there when imploring silence; so still, it might be even slumber. All who have grieved respect grief. Waife did not like to approach her; but he said, from his stand at the threshold—"The sun is quite bright now, Sophy; go out for a little while, darling."

She did not look round, she did not stir; but she answered with readiness—"Yes, presently."

So he closed the door and left her. An hour passed away; he looked in again; there

she was still—in the same place, in the same attitude.

"Sophy, dear, it is time to take your walk; go—Mrs. Morley is in front, before my window. I have called to her to wait for you."

"Yes—presently," answered Sophy, and she did not move.

Waife was seriously alarmed. He paused a moment—then went back to his room—took his hat and his staff—came back.

"Sophie, I should like to hobble out and breathe the air; it will do me good. Will you give me your arm? I am still very weak."

Sophy now started—shook back her fair curls—rose—put on her bonnet, and in less than a minute was by the old man's side. Drawing his arm friendly into hers, they descend the stairs; they are in the garden; Mrs. Morley comes to meet them—then George. Waife exerts himself to talk—to be gay—to protect Sophy's abstracted silence by his own active, desultory, erratic humor. Twice or thrice, as he leans on Sophy's arm, she draws it still nearer to her, and presses it tenderly. She understands—she thanks him. Hark! from some undiscovered hiding-place near the water—Fairthorn's flute! The Music fills the landscrape as with a living presence; the swans pause upon the still lake—the tame doe steals through yonder leafless trees; and now, musing and slow, from the same desolate coverts, comes the doe's master. The music spells them all. Guy Darrell sees his guests where they have halted by the stone sun-dial. He advances—joins them—congratulates Waife, on his first walk as a convalescent. He quotes Gray's well-known verses applicable to that event,* and when, in that voice sweet as the flute itself, he comes to the lines—

> "The common sun, the air, the skies,
> To him are opening paradise"—

Sophy, as if suddenly struck with remorse at the thought that she, and she alone, was marring that opening paradise to the old man in his escape from the sick-room to "the sun, the air, the skies," abruptly raised her looks from the ground, and turned them full upon her guardian's face, with an attempt at gladness in her quivering smile, which, whatever its effect on Waife, went straight to the innermost heart of Guy Darrell. On the instant, he recognized, as by intuitive sympathy, the anguish from which that smile struggled forth—knew that Sophy had now learned that grief which lay deep within himself—that grief which makes a sick chamber of the whole external world, and which greets no more, in the common boons of Nature, the opening Paradise of recovered Hope! His eye lingered on her face as its smile waned, and perceived that CHANGE which had so startled Waife. Involuntarily he moved to her side—involuntarily drew her arm within his own—she thus supporting the one who cherished—supported by the one who disowned her. Guy Darrell might be stern in resolves which afflicted others, as he was stern in afflicting himself; but for *others* he had at least compassion.

Poor Waife, with nature so different, marked Darrell's movement, and, ever ready to seize on comfort, said inly—"He relents. I will not go to-morrow as I had intended. Sophy must win her way; who can resist her?"

Talk languished—the wintry sun began to slope—the air grew keen—Waife was led in—the Morleys went up into his room to keep him company—Sophy escaped back to her own. Darrell continued his walk, plunging deep into his maze of beechwoods, followed by the doe. The swans dip their necks amongst the water-weeds; the flute has ceased, and drearily still is the grey horizon, seen through the skeleton boughs—seen behind the ragged sky-line of shaft and parapet in the skeleton palace.

Darrell does not visit Waife's room that day; he concludes that Waife and Sophy would wish to be much alone; he dreads renewal of the only subject on which he has no cheering word to say. Sophy's smile, Sophy's face haunted him. In vain he repeated to himself—"Tut, it will soon pass—only a girl's first fancy."

But Sophy does not come back to Waife's room when the Morleys have left it: Waife creeps into her room as before, and, as before, there she sits—still as if in slumber. She comes in, however, of her accord, to assist, as usual, in the meal which he takes apart in his room: helps him—helps herself, but eats nothing. She talks, however, almost gaily; hopes he will be well enough to leave the next day; wonders whether Sir Isaac has missed them very much; reads to him Lady Montfort's

* "See the wretch who long has tost," etc.—GRAY.

affectionate letter to herself; and when dinner is over, and Waife's chair drawn to the fireside, she takes her old habitual place on the stool beside him, and says—"Now, dear grandfather—all about yourself—what happy thing has chanced to you?"

Alas! poor Waife has but little heart to speak; but he forces himself; what he has to say may do good to her.

"You know that, on my own account, I had reasons for secresy—change of name. I shunned all those whom I had ever known in former days; could take no calling in life by which I might be recognized; deemed it a blessed mercy of Providence that when, not able to resist offers that would have enabled me to provide for you as I never otherwise could, I assented to hazard an engagement at a London theatre—trusting for my incognito to an actor's arts of disguise—came the accident which, of itself, annihilated the temptation into which I had suffered myself to be led. For, ah child! had it been known who and what was the William Waife whose stage-mime tricks moved harmless mirth, or tears as pleasant, the audience would have risen, not to applaud, but hoot—'Off, off,' from both worlds—the Mimic as the Real! Well, had I been dishonest, you—you alone felt that I could not have dared to take you, guiltless infant, by the hand. You remember that, on my return to Rugge's wandering theatre, bringing you with me, I exaggerated the effects of my accident—affected to have lost voice—stipulated to be spared appearing on his stage. That was not the mere pride of manhood shrinking from the display of physical afflictions. No. In the first village that we arrived at, I recognized an old friend, and I saw that, in spite of time, and the accident that had disfigured me, he recognized me, and turned away his face, as if in loathing. An old friend, Sophy—an old friend! Oh, it pierced me to the heart; and I resolved, from that day, to escape from Rugge's stage; and I consented, till the means of escape, and some less dependent mode of livelihood were found, to live on thy earnings, child; for if I were discovered by other old friends, and they spoke out, my disgrace would reflect on you; and better to accept support from you than that!

"Alas! appearances were so strong against me, I never deemed they could be cleared away, even from the sight of my nearest friends. But Providence, you know, has been so kind to us hitherto; and so Providence will be kind to us again, Sophy. And now, the very man I thought most hard to me—this very Guy Darrell, under whose roof we are—has been the man to make those whose opinion I most value, know that I am not dishonest; and Providence has raised a witness on my behalf in that very Mr. Hartopp, who judged me (and any one else might have done the same) too bad to be fit company for you! And that is why I am congratulated; and O, Sophy, though I have borne it as Heaven does enable us to bear what of ourselves we could not, and though one learns to shrug a patient shoulder under the obloquy which may be heaped on us by that crowd of mere strangers to us and to each other, which is called 'the WORLD,' yet to slink out of sight from a friend, as one more to be shunned than a foe—to take like a coward the lashings of scorn—to wince, one raw sore, from the kindness of Pity—to feel that in life the sole end of each shift and contrivance is to slip the view-hallo, into a grave without epitaph, by paths as stealthy and sly as the poor hunted fox, when his last chance—and sole one—is, by winding and doubling, to run under the earth; to know that it would be an ungrateful imposture to take chair at the board—at the hearth, of the man who, unknowing your secret, says—'Friend, be social;' accepting not a crust than one does not pay for, lest one feel a swindler to the kind fellow-creature whose equal we must not be!—all this, Sophy, did at times chafe and gall more than I ought to have let it do, considering that there was ONE who saw it all, and would——Don't cry, Sophy; it is all over now."

"Not cry! Oh, it does me so much good."

"All over now! I am under this roof—without shame or scruple; and if Guy Darrell, knowing all my past, has proved my innocence in the eyes of those whom alone I cared for, I feel as if I had the right to stand before any crowd of men erect and shameless—a Man once more with Men! Oh darling! let me but see thy old happy smile again! The happy smiles of the young are the sunshine of the old. Be patient—be firm; Providence is so very kind, Sophy."

CHAPTER XI.

Waife exacts from George Morley the fulfilment of one of those promises which mean nothing or everything.

THE next day George Morley visited Waife's room earlier than usual. Waife had sent for him. Sophy was seated by her grandfather—his hand in hers. She had been exerting herself to the utmost to talk cheerfully—to shake from her aspect every cloud of sorrow. But still THAT CHANGE was there—more marked than even on the previous day. A few hours of intense struggle, a single night wholly without sleep, will tell on the face of early youth. Not till we, hard veterans, have gone through such struggles as life permits not to the slight responsibilities of new recruits—not till sleepless nights have grown to us familiar—will Thought seem to take, as it were, strength, not exhaustion, from unrelaxing exercise—nourish the brain, sustain the form by its own untiring, fleshless, spiritual immortality; not till many a winter has stripped the leaves; not till deep, and far out of sight, spread the roots that support the stem—will the beat of the east wind leave no sign on the rind.

George had not, indeed, so noticed, the day before, the kind of withering blight that had passed over the girl's countenance; but he did now—when she met his eye more steadfastly, and had resumed something of the open genial infantine grace of manner which constituted her peculiar charm, and which it was difficult to associate with deeper griefs than those of childhood.

"You must scold my grandfather," she said. "He chooses to fancy that he is not well enough yet to leave; and I am sure that he is, and will recover more quickly at home than here."

"Pooh!" said Waife; "you young things suppose we old folks can be as brisk as yourselves; but if I am to be scolded, leave Mr. George unawed by your presence, and go out, my dear, while the sun lasts: I know by the ways of that blackbird that the day will be overcast by noon."

As soon as they were alone, George said abruptly, "Your Sophy is looking very ill, and if you are well enough to leave, it might be better for her to move from this gloomy house. Movement itself is a great restorative," added George with emphasis.

"You see, then, that she looks ill—very ill," said Waife deliberately; "and there is that in your manner which tells me you guess the cause."

"I do guess it, from the glimpse which I caught of Lionel's face after he had been closeted a short time with Mr. Darrell at my uncle's house two days ago. I guess it also from a letter I have received from my uncle."

"You guess right—very right," said Waife, still with the same serious, tranquil manner. "I showed her this letter from young Haughton. Read it." George hurried his eye over the letter, and returned it silently. Waife proceeded—.

"I was frightened yesterday by the strange composure she showed. In her face alone could be read what she suffered. We talked last night. I spoke of myself—of my old sorrows—in order to give her strength to support hers; and the girl has a heroic nature, Mr. George—and she is resolved to conquer or to die. But she will not conquer."

George began the usual strain of a consoler in such trials. Waife stopped him. "All that you can say, Mr. George, I know beforehand; and she will need no exhortation to prayer and to fortitude. I stole from my room when it was almost dawn. I saw light under the door of her chamber. I just looked in—softly—unperceived. She had not gone to bed. She was by the open window—stars dying out of the sky—kneeling on the floor, her face buried in her hands. She has prayed. In her soul, at this moment, be sure that she is praying now. She will devote herself to me—she will be cheerful—you will hear her laugh, Mr. George; but she will not conquer in this world; long before the new year is out, she will be looking down upon our grief with her bright smile; but we shall not see her, Mr. George. Do not think this is an old man's foolish terror; I know sorrow as physicians know disease; it has its mortal symptoms. Hush! hear me out. I have one hope—it is in you."

"In me?"

"Yes. Do you remember that you said, if I could succeed in opening to your intellect its fair career, you would be the best friend to me man ever had? and I said, 'Agreed, but change the party in the contract; befriend my Sophy instead of me, and if ever I

ask you, help me in aught for her welfare and happiness;' and you said, 'With heart and soul.' That was the bargain, Mr. George. Now you have all that you then despaired of; you have the dignity of your sacred calling—you have the eloquence of the preacher. I cannot cope with Mr. Darrell—you can. He has a heart—it can be softened; he has a soul—it can be freed from the withes that tether it down; he has the virtues you can appeal to; and he has the pride which you, as a Christian minister, have the right to prove to be a sin. I cannot argue with him; I cannot reprove the man to whom I owe so much. All ranks of men and of mind should be equal to you, the pastor, the divine. You ministers of the gospel address yourselves unabashed to the poor, the humble, the uninstructed. Did Heaven give you power and commandment over these alone? Go, Preacher! go! Speak with the same authority to the great, to the haughty, to the wise!"

The old man's look and gesture were sublime.

The Preacher felt a thrill vibrate from his ear to his heart; but his reason was less affected than his heart. He shook his head mournfully. The task thus assigned to him was beyond the limits which custom prescribes to the priest of the English Church—dictation to a man not even of his own flock, upon the closest affairs of that man's private hearth and home! Our society allows no such privilege; and our society is right.

Waife, watching his countenance, saw at once what was passing in his mind, and resumed, as if answering George's own thought,—

"Ay, if you were but the commonplace priest! But you are something more; you are the priest specially endowed for all special purposes of good. You have the mind to reason—the tongue to persuade—the majestic earnestness of impassioned zeal. Nor are you here the priest alone; you are here the friend, the confidant, of all for whom you may exert your powers.—Oh, George Morley, I am a poor ignorant blunderer when presuming to exhort you as Christian minister; but in your own words—I address you as man and gentleman—you declared that 'thought and zeal should not stammer whenever I said—Keep your promise.' I say it now—Keep faith to the child you swore to me to befriend!"

"I will go—and at once," said George, rising. "But be not sanguine. I see not a chance of success. A man so superior to myself in years, station, abilities, repute!"

"Where would be Christianity?" said Waife, "if the earliest preachers had raised such questions? There is a soldier's courage—is there not a priest's?"

George made no answer, but, with abstracted eye, gathered brow, and slow, meditative step, quitted the room, and sought Guy Darrell.

BOOK TWELFTH.

CHAPTER I.

The Man of the World shows more indifference to the things and doctrines of the World than might be supposed.—But he vindicates his character, which might otherwise be jeopardized, by the adroitness with which, having resolved to roast chestnuts in the ashes of another man's hearth, he handles them when hottest by the proxy of a—Cat's paw.

In the letter which George told Waife he had received from his uncle, George had an excuse for the delicate and arduous mission he undertook, which he did not confide to the old man, lest it should convey more hopes than its nature justified. In this letter, Alban related, with a degree of feeling that he rarely manifested, his farewell conversation with Lionel, who had just departed to join his new regiment The poor young man had buoyed himself up with delighted expectations of the result of Sophy's prolonged residence under Darrell's roof; he had persuaded his reason that when Darrell had been thus enabled to see and judge of her for himself, he would be irresistibly attracted towards her; that Innocence, like Truth, would be mighty, and prevail; Darrell was engaged in the attempt to clear William Losely's name and blood from the taint of felony;—Alban was commissioned to negotiate with Jasper Losely on any terms that would remove all chance of future disgrace from that quarter. Oh yes! to poor Lionel's eyes obstacles vanished—the future became clear.

And thus, when, after telling him of his final interview with the minister, Darrell said, "I trust that, in bringing to William Losely this intelligence, I shall at least soften his disappointment, when I make it thoroughly clear to him how impossible it is that his Sophy can ever be more to me—to *us*—than a stranger whose virtues create an interest in her welfare" —Lionel was stunned as by a blow. Scarcely could he murmur—

"You have seen her—and your resolve remains the same."

"Can you doubt it?" answered Darrell, as if in surprise. "The resolve may now give me pain on my account, as before it gave me pain on yours. But if not moved by your pain, can I be moved by mine? *That* would be a baseness."

The Colonel, in depicting Lionel's state of mind after the young soldier had written his farewell to Waife, and previous to quitting London, expressed very gloomy forebodings. "I do not say," wrote he, "that Lionel will guiltily seek death in the field, nor does death there come more to those who seek than to those who shun it; but he will go upon a service exposed to more than ordinary suffering, privation, and disease—without that rallying power of hope—that Will, and Desire To Live, which constitute the true stamina of Youth. And I have always set a black mark upon those who go into war joyless and despondent. Send a young fellow to the camp with his spirits broken, his heart heavy as a lump of lead, and the first of those epidemics which thin ranks more than the cannon, says to itself, 'There is a man for me!' Any doctor will tell you that, even at home, the gay and light-hearted walk safe through the pestilence, which settles on the moping as malaria settles on a march. Confound Guy Darrell's ancestors, they have spoilt Queen Victoria as good a young soldier as ever wore sword by his side! Six months ago, and how blithely Lionel Haughton looked forth to the future!"—all laurel!—no cypress! And now I feel as if I had shaken hands with a victim sacrificed by Superstition to the tombs of the dead. I cannot blame Darrell: I daresay in the same position I might do the same.

"But no; on second thoughts, I should not!

If Darrell does not choose to marry and have sons of his own, he has no right to load a poor boy with benefits, and say, 'There is but one way to prove your gratitude; remember my ancestors, and be miserable for the rest of your days!' Darrell, forsooth, intends to leave to Lionel the transmission of the old Darrell name; and the old Darrell name must not be tarnished by the marriage on which Lionel has unluckily set his heart! I respect the old name; but it is not like the House of Vipont—a British Institution. And if some democratical cholera, which does not care a rush for old names, carries off Lionel, what becomes of the old name then? Lionel is not Darrell's son; Lionel need not, perforce, take the old name. Let the young man live as Lionel Houghton, and the old name die with Guy Darrell!

"As to the poor girl's birth and parentage, I believe we shall never know them. I quite agree with Darrell that it will be wisest never to inquire. But I dismiss as far-fetched and improbable, his supposition that she is Gabrielle Desmaret'a daughter. To me it is infinitely more likely, either that the deposition of the Nurse, which poor Willy gave to Darrell, and which Darrell showed to me, is true (only, that Jasper was conniving at the temporary suspension of his child's existence while it suited his purpose)—or that, at the worst, this mysterious young lady is the daughter of the *artiste*. In the former supposition, as I have said over and over again, a marriage between Lionel and Sophy is precisely that which Darrell should desire; in the latter case, of course, if Lionel were the head of the House of Vipont, the idea of such an union would be inadmissable. But Lionel, *entre nous*, is the son of a ruined spendthrift by a linen-draper's daughter. And Darrell has but to give the handsome young couple five or six thousand a year, and I know the world well enough to know that the world will trouble itself very little about their pedigrees.

"And really Lionel should be left wholly free to choose whether he prefer a girl whom he loves with his whole heart, five or six thousand a-year, happiness, and the chance of honors in a glorious profession to which he will then look with glad spirits—or a life-long misery, with the right, after Darrell's death—that I hope will not be these thirty years—to bear the name of Darrel instead of Haughton, which, if I were the last of the Haughtons, and had any family pride—as, thank Heaven, I have not—would be a painful exchange to me; and dearly-bought by the addition of some additional thousands a-year, when I had grown perhaps as little disposed to spend them as Guy Darrell himself is. But, after all, there is one I compassionate even more than young Haughton. My morning rides of late have been much in the direction of Twickenham, visiting our fair cousin Lady Montfort. I went first to lecture her for letting these young people see so much of each other.

"But my anger melted into admiration and sympathy, when I found with what tender, exquisite, matchless friendship she had been all the while scheming for Darrell's happiness; and with what remorse she now contemplated the sorrow which a friendship so grateful, and a belief so natural, had innocently occasioned. That remorse is wearing her to death. Dr. F———, who attended poor dear Willy, is also attending her; and he told me privately, that his skill was in vain—that her case baffled him; and he had very serious apprehensions. Darrell owes some consideration to such a friend. And to think that here are lives permanently embittered, if not risked, by the ruthless obstinacy of the best-hearted man I ever met! Now, though I have already intimated my opinions to Darrell with a candor due to the oldest and dearest of my friends, yet I have never, of course, in the letters I have written to him, or the talk we have had together, spoken out as plainly as I do in writing to you. And having thus written, without awe of his grey eye and dark brow, I have half a mind to add—'seize him in a happy moment and show him this letter.' Yes, I give you full leave; show it to him if you think it would avail. If not, throw it into the fire, and pray Heaven for those whom we poor mortals cannot serve."

On the envelope, Alban had added these words—"But of course, before showing the enclosed, you will prepare Darrell's mind to weigh its contents." And probably it was in that curt and simple injunction that the subtle man of the world evinced the astuteness of which not a trace was apparent in the body of his letter.

Though Alban's communication had much excited his nephew, yet George had not judged

it discreet to avail himself of the permission to show it to Darrell. It seemed to him that the pride of his host would take much more offence at its transmission through the hands of a third person, than at the frank tone of its reasonings and suggestions. And George had determined to re-enclose it to the Colonel, urging him to forward it himself to Darrell just as it was, with but a brief line to say, "that, on reflection, Alban submitted, direct to his old school-fellow, the reasonings and apprehensions which he had so unreservedly poured forth in a letter commenced without the intention at which the writer arrived at the close." But now that the preacher had undertaken the duty of an advocate, the letter became his brief.

George passed through the library, through the study, up the narrow stair that finally conducted to the same lofty cell in which Darrell had confronted the midnight robber who claimed a child in Sophy. With a nervous hand George knocked at the door.

Unaccustomed to any intrusion on the part of guest or household in that solitary retreat, somewhat sharply, as if in anger, Darrell's voice answered the knock.

"Who's there?"

"George Morley."

Darrell opened the door.

CHAPTER II.

"A good archer is not known by his arrows, but his aim." "A good man is no more to be feared than a sheep." "A good surgeon must have an eagle's eye, a lion's heart, and a lady's hand." "A good tongue is a good weapon." And despite those suggestive or encouraging proverbs, George Morley has undertaken something so opposed to all proverbial philosophy, that it becomes a grave question what he will do with it.

"I COME," said George, "to ask you one of the greatest favors a man can confer upon another; it will take some little time to explain. Are you at leisure?"

Darrell's brow relaxed.

"Seat yourself in comfort, my dear George. If it be in my power to serve or to gratify Alban Morley's nephew, it is I who receive a favor." Darrell thought to himself, "the young man is ambitious—I may aid in his path towards a See!"

GEORGE MORLEY.—"First let me say that I would consult your intellect on a matter which habitually attracts and engages mine—that old vexed question of the origin and uses of Evil, not only in the physical, but the moral world; it involves problems over which I would ponder for hours as a boy—on which I wrote essays as a school-man—on which I perpetually collect illustrations to fortify my views as a theologian."

"He is writing a book," thought Darrell, enviously; "and a book on such a subject will last him all his life. Happy man!"

GEORGE MORLEY.—"The Pastor, you know, is frequently consulted by the suffering and oppressed; frequently called upon to answer that question in which the scepticism of the humble and the ignorant ordinarily begins—'Why am I suffering? Why am I oppressed? Is this the justice of Providence? Has the Great Father that benign pity, that watchful care for his children, which you preachers tell us?' Ever intent on deducing examples from the lives to which the clue has become apparent, must be the Priest who has to reason with Affliction caused by no apparent fault; and where, judged by the Canons of Human justice, cloud and darkness obscure the Divine—still to 'vindicate the ways of God to man.'"

DARRELL.—"A philosophy that preceded, and will outlive, all other schools. It is twin-born with the world itself. Go on; though the theme be inexhaustible, its interest never flags."

GEORGE MORLEY.—"Has it struck you, Mr. Darrell, that few lives have ever passed under your survey, in which the inexpressible tenderness of the Omniscient has been more visibly clear than in that of your guest, William Losely?"

DARRELL (surprised).—"Clear? To me, I confess that if ever there were an instance in which the Divine tenderness, the Divine justice, which I can never presume to doubt, was yet undiscernible to my bounded vision, it is in the instance of the very life you refer to. I see a man of admirable virtues—of a child-like simplicity of character, which makes him almost unconscious of the grandeur of his own soul—involved by a sublime self-sacrifice—by a virtue, not by a fault—in the most dreadful of human calamities—ignominious degradation;—hurled in the mid-day of life

from the sphere of honest men—a felon's brand on his name—a vagrant in his age; justice at last, but tardy and niggard, and giving him but little joy when it arrives; because, ever thinking only of others, his heart is wrapped in a child whom he cannot make happy in the way in which his hopes have been set!—George—no, your illustration might be turned by a sceptic into an argument against you."

GEORGE MORLEY.—"Not unless the sceptic refused the elementary starting-ground from which you and I may reason; not if it be granted that man has a soul, which it is the object of this life to enrich and develop for another. We know from my uncle what William Losely was before this calamity befell him—a genial boon-companion—a careless, frank, 'good fellow'—all the virtues you now praise in him, dormant, unguessed even by himself. Suddenly came CALAMITY!—suddenly arose the SOUL! Degradation of name, and with it dignity of nature! How poor, how slight, how insignificant William Losely the hanger-on of rural Thanes compared with that William Waife whose entrance into this house, you—despite that felon's brand when you knew it was the martyr's glory,—greeted with noble reverence; whom, when the mind itself was stricken down—only the soul left to the wreck of the body—you tended with such pious care as he lay on your father's bed! And do you, who hold Nobleness in such honor—do you, of all men, tell me that you cannot recognize that Celestial tenderness which ennobled a Spirit for all Eternity?"

"George, you are right," cried Darrell; "and I was a blockhead and blunderer, as man always is when he mistakes a speck in his telescope for a blotch in the sun of a system."

GEORGE MORLEY.—"But more difficult it is to recognize the mysterious agencies of Heavenly Love when no great worldly adversity forces us to pause and question. Let Fortune strike down a victim, and even the heathen cries, 'This is the hand of God!' But where Fortune brings no vicissitude; where her wheel runs smooth, dropping wealth or honors as it rolls—where Affliction centres its work within the secret, unrevealing heart—there, even the wisest man may not readily perceive by what means Heaven is admonishing, forcing, or wooing him nearer to itself. I take the case of a man in whom Heaven acknowledges a favored son. I assume his outward life crowned with successes, his mind stored with opulent gifts, his nature endowed with lofty virtues; what an heir to train through the brief school of earth for due place in the ages that roll on for ever! But this man has a parasite weed in each bed of a soul rich in flowers;—weed and flowers intertwined, stem with stem—their fibres uniting even deep down to the root. Can you not conceive with what untiring vigilant care Heaven will seek to disentangle the flower from the weed?—how (let me drop inadequate metaphor)—how Heaven will select for its warning chastisements that very error which the man has so blent with his virtues that he holds it a virtue itself?—how, gradually, slowly, pertinaciously, it will gather this beautiful nature all to itself—insist on a sacrifice it will ask from no other? To complete the true nature of poor William Losely, Heaven ordained the sacrifice of worldly repute; to complete the true nature of Guy Darrell, God ordains him the sacrifice of PRIDE!"

Darrell started—half rose; his eye flashed—his cheek paled; but he remained silent.

"I have approached the favor I supplicate," resumed George, drawing a deep breath, as of relief. "Greater favor man can scarcely bestow upon his fellow. I entreat you to believe that I respect, and love, and honor you sufficiently to be for a while so lifted up into your friendship, that I may claim the privilege, without which friendship is but a form;—just as no freedom is more obnoxious than intrusion on confidence withheld, so no favor, I repeat, more precious than the confidence which a man of worth vouchsafes to him who invites it with no claim but the loyalty of his motives."

Said Darrell, softened, but with stateliness—"All human lives are as separate circles; they may touch at one point in friendly approach, but, even where they touch, each rounds itself from off the other. With this hint I am contented to ask at what point in my circle you would touch?"

GEORGE MORLEY.—"I thank you gratefully; I accept your illustration. The point is touched; I need no other." He paused a

moment, as if concentrating all his thoughts, and then said, with musing accents—"Yes, I accept your illustration; I will even strengthen the force of the truth implied in it by a more homely illustration of my own. There are small skeleton abridgments of history which we give to children. In such a year a king was crowned—a battle was fought; there was some great disaster, or some great triumph. Of the true progress and development of the nation whose record is thus epitomized—of the complicated causes which lead to these salient events—of the animated, varied multitudinous life which has been hurrying on from epoch to epoch, the abridgment tells nothing. It is so with the life of each individual man; the life as it stands before us is but a sterile epitome—hid from our sight the EMOTIONS which are the People of the Heart. In such a year occurred a visible something—a gain—a loss—a success—a disappointment; the People of the Heart crowned or deposed a King. This is all we know; and the most voluminous biography ever written must still be a meagre abridgment of all that really individualized and formed a man. I ask not your confidence in a single detail or fact in your existence which lies beyond my sight. Far from me so curious an insolence; but I do ask you this—Reflecting on your past life as a whole, have not your chief sorrows had a common idiosyncrasy? Have they not been strangely directed towards the frustration of some one single object—cherished by your earliest hopes, and, as if in defiance of fate, resolutely clung to even now?"

"It is true, muttered Darrell. "You do not offend me; go on!"

"And have not these SORROWS, in frustrating your object, often assumed, too, a certain uniformity in the weapons they use, in the quarter they harass or invade, almost as if it were a strategic policy that guided them where they could most pain, or humble, or eject a FOE that they were ordered to storm? Degrade you they could not; such was not their mission. Heaven left you intact a kingliness of nature—a loftiness of spirit, unabased by assaults levelled not against yourself, but your pride; your personal dignity, though singularly sensitive, though bitterly galled, stood proof. What might lower lesser men, lowered not you; Heaven left you that diguity, for it belongs alike to your intellect and your virtues—but suffered it to be a source of your anguish. Why? Because, not content with adorning your virtues, it was covering the fault against which were directed the sorrows. You frown—forgive me."

"You do not transgress, unless It be as a flatterer? If I frowned, it was unconsciously—the sign of thought, not anger. Pause!—my mind has left you for a moment; it is looking into the past."

The past!—Was it not true? That home to whose porch came in time the Black Horses, in time just to save from the last worst dishonor, but not save from years racked by each pang that can harrow man's dignity in each daily assault on the fort of man's pride; the sly treacherous daughter—her terrible marriage—the man whose disgrace she had linked to her blood, and whose life still was insult and threat to his own! True, what a war upon Pride! And even in that secret and fatal love which had been of all his griefs the most influential and enduring, had his pride been less bitterly wounded, and that pride less enthroned in his being, would his grief have been so relentless, his attempts at its conquest so vain! And then, even now—what was it said "I can bless"—holy LOVE! What was it said "but not pardon"—stern PRIDE! And so on to these last revolutions of sterile life. Was he not miserable in Lionel's and Sophy's misery? Forlorn in that Citadel of Pride—closed round and invested with Sorrows—and the last hopes that had fled to the fortress, slain in defence of its outworks. With hand shading his face, Darrell remained some minutes silent. At last he raised his head, and his eye was steadfast, his lip firm.

"George Morley," said he, "I acknowledge much justice in the censure you have conveyed, with so artful a delicacy, that if it fail to reform, it cannot displease, and leaves much to be seriously revolved in solitary self-commune. But though I may own that pride is not made for man, and that in the blindness of human judgment I may often have confounded pride with duty, and suffered for the mistake, yet that one prevailing object of my life, which with so startling a truth you say it has pleased Heaven to frustrate, I cannot hold an error in itself. You have learned enough from your uncle, seen enough of me yourself,

to know what that object has been. You are scholar enough to concede to me that it is no ignoble homage which either nations or persons render to the ancestral Dead—that homage is an instinct in all but vulgar and sordid natures. Has a man no ancestry of his own—rightly and justly, if himself of worth, he appropriates to his lineage all the heroes, and bards, and patriots of his fatherland! A free citizen has ancestors in all the glorious chiefs that have adorned the State, on the sole condition that he shall revere their tombs, and guard their memory as a son! And thus, whenever they who speak trumpet-tongued to grand democracies, would rouse some quailing generation to heroic deed or sacrifice, they appeal in the Name of Ancestors, and call upon the living to be worthy of the dead?

"That which is so laudable—nay, so necessary a sentiment in the mass, cannot be a fault that angers Heaven in the man. Like all high sentiments, it may compel harsh and rugged duties; it may need the stern suppression of many a gentle impulse—of many a pleasing wish. But we must regard it in its merit and consistency as a whole. And if, my eloquent and subtle friend, all you have hitherto said be designed but to wind into pleas for the same cause that I have already decided against the advocate in my own heart which sides with Lionel's generous love and yon fair girl's ingenuous and touching grace, let us break up the court; the judge has no choice but the law which imperiously governs his judgment."

GEORGE MORLEY.—"I have not hitherto presumed to apply to particular cases the general argument you so indulgently allow me to urge in favor of my theory, that in the world of the human heart, when closely examined, there is the same harmony of design as in the external universe; that in Fault and in Sorrow are the axioms, and problems, and postulates of a SCIENCE. Bear with me a little longer if I still pursue the same course of reasoning. I shall not have the arrogance to argue a special instance—to say, 'This you should do, this you should not do.' All I would ask is, leave to proffer a few more suggestions to your own large and candid experience."

Said Darrell, irresistibly allured on, but with a tinge of his grave irony, "You have the true genius of the pulpit, and I concede to you its rights. I will listen with the wish to profit—the more susceptible of conviction, because freed from the necessity to reply."

GEORGE MORLEY.—"You vindicate the object which has been the main ambition of your life. You say 'not an ignoble object.' Truly! ignoble objects are not for you. The question is, are there not objects *nobler*, which should have attained higher value, and led to larger results in the soul which Providence assigned to you; was not the proper place of the object you vindicate that of an auxiliary—a subordinate, rather than that of the all-directing, self-sufficing leader and autocrat of such various powers of mind? I picture you to myself—a lone, bold-hearted boy—in this ancient hall, amidst these primitive landscapes, in which old associations are so little disturbed by the modern—in which the wild turf of waste lands, vanishing deep into mazes of solemn wood, lends the scene to dreams of gone days—brings Adventure and Knighthood, and all the poetical colors of Eld, to unite the homage due to the ancestral dead with the future ambition of life;—Image full of interest and of pathos—a friendless child of a race more beloved for its decay, looking dauntless on to poverty and toil, with that conviction of power which is born of collected purpose and earnest will; and recording his secret vow, that single-handed he will undo the work of destroying ages, and restore his line to its place of honor in the land!"

George paused, and tears stood in Darrell's eyes.

"Yes," resumed the scholar—"yes, for the child, for the youth, for the man in his first daring stride into the Action of Life, that object commands our respectful sympathies. But wait a few years. Has that object expanded? Has it led on into objects embracing humanity? Remains it alone and sterile in the bosom of successful genius? Or is it prolific and fruitful of grander designs—of more wide-spreading uses? Make genius successful, and all men have the right to say, 'Brother, help us!' What! no other object still but to build up a house!—to recover a line! What was grand at one stage of an onward career, is narrow and small at another! Ambition limited to the rise of a family! Can our sympathies still hallow *that!* No! In Guy Darrell successful—that ambition was

treason to earth! Mankind was his family now! THEREFORE Heaven thwarted the object which opposed its own ends in creating you! THEREFORE childless you stand on your desolate hearth!—THEREFORE, lo! side by side—yon uncompleted pile—your own uncompleted life!"

Darrell sate dumb.—He was appalled!

GEORGE MORLEY.—"Has not that object stinted your very intellect? Has it not, while baffled in its own centred aim—has it not robbed you of the glory which youth craved, and which manhood might have won? Idolater to the creed of an Ancestor's NAME, has your own name that hold on the grateful respect of the Future, which men ever give to that genius whose objects are knit with mankind? Suddenly, in the zenith of life, amidst cheers, not of genuine renown,—cheers loud and brief as a mob's hurrah—calamities, all of which I know not, nor conjecture, interrupt your career;—and when your own life-long object is arrested, or rather when it is snatched from your eye, your genius renounces all uses. Fame, ever-during, was before you still, had your objects been those for which genius is given. You muse. Heaven permits these rude words to strike home! Guy Darrell, it is not too late! Heaven's warnings are always in time. Reflect, with the one narrow object was fostered and fed the one master failing of Pride. To us as Christians, or as reasoners, it is not in this world that every duty is to find its special meed; yet by that same mystical LAW which makes Science of Sorrow, rewards are but often the normal effect of duties sublimely fulfilled.

"Out of your pride and your one-cherished object, has there grown happiness? Has the success which was not denied you achieved the link with posterity that your hand, if not fettered would long since have forged? Grant that Heaven says, 'Stubborn child, yield at last to the warnings vouchsafed to thee by my love! From a son so favored and strong I exact the most difficult offering! Thou hast sacrificed much, but for ends not prescribed in my law; sacrifice now to me the thing thou most clingest to—Pride. I make the pang I demand purposely bitter. I twine round the offering I ask the fibres that bleed in relaxing. What to other men would be no duty, is duty to thee, because it entails a triumphant self-conquest, and pays to Humanity the arrears of just dues long neglected.' Grant the hard sacrifice made; I must think Heaven has ends for your joy even here, when it asks you to part with the cause of your sorrows;—I must think that your evening of life may have sunshine denied to its noon. But with God are no bargains. A virtue, the most arduous because it must trample down what your life has exalted as virtue, is before you; distasteful, austere, repellant. The most inviting arguments in its favor are, that it proffers no bribes; men would acquit you in rejecting it; judged by our world's ordinary rule, men would be right in acquitting you. But if on reflection you say in your heart of hearts, 'This *is* a virtue,' you will follow its noiseless path up to the smile of God!"

The preacher ceased.

Darrell breathed a long sigh, rose slowly, took George's hand, pressed it warmly in both his own, and turned quickly and silently away. He paused in the deep recess where the gleam of the wintry sun shot through the small casement, aslant and pale on the massive wall: opening the lattice he looked forth on the old hereditary trees—on the Gothic church-tower—on the dark evergreens that belted his father's tomb. Again he sighed, but this time the sigh had a haughty sound in its abrupt impatience; and George felt that words written must remain to strengthen and confirm the effect of words spoken. He had at least obeyed his uncle's wise injunction—he had prepared Darrell's mind to weigh the contents of a letter, which, given in the first instance, would perhaps have rendered Darrell's resolution not less stubborn, by increasing the pain to himself which the resolution already inflicted.

Darrell turned, and looked towards George, as if in surprise to see him still lingering there.

"I have now but to place before you this letter from my uncle to myself; it enters into those details which it would have misbecome me specially to discuss. Remember, I entreat you, in reading it, that it is written by your oldest friend—by a man who has no dull discrimination in the perplexities of life, or the niceties of honor."

Darrell bowed his head in assent and took

the letter. George was about to leave the room.

"Stay," said Darrell, "'tis best to have but one interwiew—one conversation on the subject which has been just enforced on me; and the letter may need a comment or a message to your uncle." He stood hesitating, with the letter open in his hand; and, fixing his keen eye on George's pale and powerful countenance said, "How is it that, with an experience of mankind, which you will pardon me for assuming to be limited, you yet read so wondrously the complicated human heart?"

"If I really have that gift," said George, "I will answer your question by another: Is it through experience that we learn to read the human heart—or is it through sympathy? If it be experience, what becomes of the Poet? If the Poet be born, not made is it not because he is born to sympathize with what he has never experienced?"

"I see! There are born Preachers!"

Darrell reseated himself, and began Alban's letter. He was evidently moved by the Colonel's account of Lionel's grief, muttering to himself, "Poor boy!—but he is brave—he is young." When he came to Alban's forebodings on the effects of dejection upon the stamina of life, he pressed his hand quickly against his breast as if he had received a shock! He mused a while before he resumed his task; then he read rapidly and silently till his face flushed, and he repeated in a hollow tone, inexpressibly mournful, "Let the young man live, and the old name die with Guy Darrell. Ay, ay! see how the world sides with Youth! What matters all else so that Youth have its toy?" Again his eye hurried on impatiently till he came to the passage devoted to Lady Montfort; then George saw that the paper trembled violently in his hand, and that his very lips grew white. "'Serious apprehensions,'" he muttered. "I owe 'consideration to such a friend.' This man is without a heart!"

He clenched the paper in his hand without reading farther. "Leave me this letter, George; I will give an answer to that and to you before night." He caught up his hat as he spoke, passed into the lifeless picture-gallery, and so out into the open air. George, dubious and anxious, gained the solitude of his own room, and locked the door.

CHAPTER III.

At last the great question by Torture is fairly applied to Guy Darrell.

WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT? What will Guy Darrell do with the thought that weighs on his brain, rankles in his heart, perplexes his dubious conscience? What will he do with the Law which has governed his past life? What will he do with that shadow of A NAME which, alike in swarming crowds or in lonely burial-places, has spelled his eye and lured his step as a beckoning ghost? What will he do with the PRIDE from which the mask has been so rudely torn? What will he do with idols so long revered? *Are* they idols, or are they but symbols and images of holy truths? What will he do with the torturing problem, on the solution of which depend the honor due to consecrated ashes, and the rights due to beating hearts? There, restless he goes, the arrow of that question in his side—now through the broad waste lands—now through the dim woods, pausing oft with short quick sigh, with hand swept across his brow as if to clear away a cloud;—now snatched from our sight by the evergreens round the tomb in that still churchyard—now emerging slow, with melancholy eyes fixed on the old roof-tree! What will he do with it? The Question of Questions in which all Futurity is opened, has him on its rack. WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT? Let us see.

CHAPTER IV.

Immunis aram si tetigit manus,
Non sumptuosa blandior hostia,
Mollivit aversas Penates,
Farre pio et saliente mica.—HORAT.

IT is the grey of the evening. Fairthorn is sauntering somewhat sullenly along the banks of the lake. He has missed, the last three days, his walk with Sophy—missed the pleasing excitement of talking *at* her, and *of* the family in whose obsolete glories he considers her very interest an obtrusive impertinence. He has missed, too, his more habitual and less irritating conversation with Darrell. In short, altogether he is put out, and he vents his spleen on the swans, who follow him along

the wave as he walks along the margin, intimating either their affection for himself, or their anticipation of the bread-crumbs associated with his image—by the amiable note, half snort and half grunt, to which change of time or climate has reduced the vocal accomplishments of those classical birds, so pathetically melodious in the age of Moschus and on the banks of Cayster.

"Not a crumb, you unprincipled beggars," growled the musician. "You imagine that mankind are to have no other thought but that of supplying you with luxuries! And if you were asked, in a competitive examination, to define ME, your benefactor, you would say—'a thing very low in the scale of creation, without wings or even feathers, but which Providence endowed with a peculiar instinct for affording nutritious and palatable additions to the ordinary aliment of Swans!' Ay, you may grunt; I wish I had you—in a pie!"

Slowly, out through the gap between yon grey crag and the thorn-tree, paces the doe, halting to drink just where the faint star of eve shoots its gleam along the wave. The musician forgets the swans and quickens his pace, expecting to meet the doe's wonted companion. He is not disappointed. He comes on Guy Darrell where the twilight shadow falls darkest between the grey crag and the thorn-tree.

"Dear Fellow Hermit," said Darrell, almost gaily, yet with more than usual affection in his greetings and voice, "you find me just when I want you. I am as one whose eyes have been strained by a violent conflict of colors, and your quiet presence is like the relief of a return to green. I have news for you, Fairthorn. You, who know more of my secrets than any other man, shall be the first to learn a decision that must bind you and me more together—but not in these scenes, Dick.

'Ibimus—ibimus!
———— Supremum
Carpere iter, comites, parati!'"

"What do you mean, sir?" asked Fairthorn. "My mind always misgives me when I hear you quoting Horace. Some reflection about the certainty of death, or other disagreeable subjects, is sure to follow!"

"Death! No, Dick—not now. Marriage-bells and joy, Dick! We shall have a wedding!"

"What! You will marry at last! And it must be that beautiful Caroline Lyndsay! It must—it must! You can never love another! You know it, my dear, dear master. I shall see you, then, happy before I die."

"Tut, foolish old friend!" said Darrell, leaning his arm tenderly on Fairthorn's shoulder, and walking on slowly towards the house. "How often must I tell you that no marriage-bells can ring for me!"

"But you have told me, too, that you went to Twickenham to steal a sight of *her* again; and that it was the sight of her that made you resolve to wed no one else. And when I have railed against her for fickleness, have not you nearly frightened me out of my wits, as if no one might rail against her but yourself? And now she is free—and did you not grant that she would not refuse your hand, and would be true and faithful henceforth? And yet you insist on being—granite."

"No, Dick, not granite; I wish I were."

"Granite and pride," persisted Dick, courageously. "If one chips a bit off the granite, one only breaks one's spade against the pride."

"Pride!—you too!" muttered Darrell, mournfully; then aloud. "No, it is not pride now, whatever it might have been even yesterday. But I would rather be racked by all the tortures that pious inquisitiors ever invented out of compassion for obstinate heritics, than condemn the woman I have so fatally loved to a penance the misery of which she cannot foresee. She would accept me?—Certainly! Why? Because she thinks she owes me reparation—because she pities me. And my heart tells me that I might become cruel, and mean, and vindictive, if I were to live day by day with one who created in me, while my life was at noon a love never known in its morn, and to feel that that love's sole return was the pity vouchsafed to the nightfall of my age. No; if she pitied, but did not love me, when, eighteen years ago, we parted under yonder beech-tree, I should be a dotard to dream that woman's pity mellows into love as our locks become gray, and Youth turns our vows into ridicule. It is not pride that speaks here; it is rather humility, Dick. But we must now talk of old age and bygones. Youth and marriage-bells, Dick! Know that I have been for hours pondering how to reconcile with my

old-fashioned notions dear Lionel's happiness. We must think of the living as well as the dead, Dick I have solved the problem. I am happy, and so shall the young folks be."

"You don't mean to say that you will consent to—"

"Yes, to Lionel's marriage with that beautiful girl, whose parentage we never will ask. Great men are their own ancestors; why not sometimes fair women? Enough—I consent! I shall of course secure to my kinsman and his bride an ample fortune. Lionel will have time for his honeymoon before he departs for the wars. He will fight with good heart now, Dick. Young folks of the present day cannot bear up against sorrow, as they were trained to do in mine. And that amiable lady who has so much pity for me, has of course, still more pity for a charming young couple for whose marriage she schemed, in order to give me a home, Dick. And rather than she should pine and fall ill, and—no matter; all shall be settled as it should be for the happiness of the living. But something else must be settled; we must think of the dead as well as the living; and this name of Darrell shall be buried with me in the grave beside my father's. Lionel Haughton will keep to his own name. Live the Haughtons! Perish, but with no blot on their shield—perish the Darrells! Why, what is that? Tears, Dick? Pooh!—be a man! And I want all your strength; for you, too, must have a share in the sacrifice. What follows is not the dictate of Pride, if I *can* read myself aright. No; it is the final completion and surrender of the object on which so much of my life has been wasted—but a surrender that satisfies my crotchets of honor. At all events, if it be pride in disguise, it will demand no victim in others; you and I may have a sharp pang—we must bear it, Dick."

"What on earth is coming now?" said Dick, dolefully.

"The due to the dead, Richard Fairthorn. This nook of fair England, in which I learned from the dead to love honor—this poor domain of Fawley—shall go in bequest to the College at which I was reared."

"Sir!"

"It will serve for a fellowship or two to honest, brave-hearted young scholars. It will be thus, while English institutions may last, devoted to Learning and Honor. It may sustain for mankind some ambition more generous than mine, it appears, ever was—settled thus, not in mine, but my dear father's name, like the Darrell Museum. These are my dues to the dead, Dick! And the old house thus becomes useless. The new house was ever a folly. They must go down both, as soon as the young folks are married;—not a stone stand on stone! The ploughshare shall pass over their sites! And this task I order you to see done. I have not strength. You will then hasten to join me at Sorrento, that corner of earth on which Horace wished to breathe his last sigh.

'Ille te mecum locus et beatæ
Postulant arces—ibi—tu——'"

"Don't, sir, don't. Horace again! It is too much." Fairthorn was choking; but as if the idea presented to him was really too monstrous for belief he clutched at Darrell with so uncertain and vehement a hand that he almost caught him by the throat, and sobbed out, "You must be joking."

"Seriously and solemnly, Richard Fairthorn," said Darrell, gently disentangling the fingers that threatened him with strangulation, "seriously and solemnly I have uttered to you my deliberate purpose. I implore you, in the name of our life-long friendship, to face this pain as I do—resolutely, cheerfully. I implore you to execute to the letter the instruction I shall leave with you on quitting England, which I shall do the day Lionel is married; and then, dear old friend, calm days, clear conscience:—In climes where whole races have passed away—proud cities themselves sunk in graves—where our petty grief for a squirearch's lost house we shall both grow ashamed to indulge—there we will moralize, rail against vain dreams and idle pride, cultivate vines and orange trees, with Horace—nay, nay, Dick—with the FLUTE!"

CHAPTER V.

More bounteous run rivers when the ice that locked their flow melts into their waters. And when fine natures relent, their kindness is swelled by the thaw.

DARRELL escaped into the house; Fairthorn sunk upon the ground, and resigned himself

for some minutes to unmanly lamentations. Suddenly he started up; a thought came into his brain—a hope into his breast. He made a caper launched himself into a precipitate zig-zag—gained the hall door—plunged into his own mysterious hiding-place—and in less than an hour re emerged, a letter in his hand, with which he had just time to catch the postman, as that functionary was striding off from the back yard with the official bag.

This exploit performed, Fairthorn shambled into his chair at the dinner-table, as George Morley concluded the grace which preceded the meal that in Fairthorn's estimation usually made the grand event of the passing day. But the poor man's appetite was gone. As Sophy dined with Waife, the Morleys alone shared, with host and secretary, the melancholy entertainment. George was no less silent than Fairthorn; Darrell's manner perplexed him.

Mrs. Morley, not admitted into her husband's confidence in secrets that concerned others, though in all his own he was to her conjugal sight *pellucidior vitro*, was the chief talker; and being the best woman in the world, ever wishing to say something pleasant, she fell to praising the dear old family pictures that scowled at her from the wall, and informed Fairthorn that she had made great progress with her sketch of the old house as seen from the lake, and was in doubt whether she should introduce in the foreground some figures of the olden time, as in Nash's Views of Baronial Mansions. But not a word could she coax out of Fairthorn; and when she turned to appeal to Darrell, the host suddenly addressed to George a question as to the texts and authorities by which the Papal Church defends its doctrine of Purgatory. That entailed a long, and no doubt, erudite reply, which lasted not only through the rest of the dinner, but till Mrs. Morley, edified by the discourse, and delighted to notice the undeviating attention which Darrell paid to her distinguished spouse, took advantage of the first full stop, and retired. Fairthorn finished his bottle of port, and, far from convinced that there was no Purgatory, but inclined to advance the novel heresy that Purgatory sometimes commenced on this side of the grave—slinked away, and was seen no more that night; neither was his flute heard.

Then Darrell rose, and said, "I shall go upstairs to our sick friend for a few minutes; may I find you here when I come back? Your visit to him can follow mine."

On entering Waife's room, Darrell went straight forward towards Sophy, and cut off her retreat.

"Fair guest," said he, with a grace and tenderness of manner which, when he pleased it, could be ineffably bewitching—"teach me some art by which in future rather to detain than to scare away the presence in which a duller age than mine could still recognize the charms that subdue the young." He led her back gently to the seat she had deserted—placed himself next to her—addressed a few cordial queries to Waife about his health and comforts—and then said, "You must not leave me for some days yet. I have written by this post to my kinsman, Lionel Haughton. I have refused to be his ambassador at a court in which, by all the laws of nations, he is bound to submit himself to his conqueror. I cannot even hope that he may escape with his freedom. No! chains for life! Thrice happy, indeed, if that be the merciful sentence you inflict."

He raised Sophy's hand to his lips as he ended, and before she could even quite comprehend the meaning of his words—so was she startled, confused, incredulous of such sudden change in fate—the door had closed on Darrell, and Waife had clasped her to his breast, murmuring, "Is not Providence kind?"

Darrell rejoined the scholar. "George," said he, "be kind enough to tell Alban that you showed me his letter. Be kind enough also to write to Lady Montfort, and say that I gratefully acknowledge her wish to repair to me those losses which have left me to face age and the grave alone. Tell her that her old friend (you remember, George, I knew her as a child) sees in that wish the same sweet goodness of heart which soothed him when his son died and his daughter fled. Add that her wish is gratified. To that marriage in which she compassionately foresaw the best solace left to my bereaved and baffled existence—to that marriage I give my consent."

"You do! Oh, Mr. Darrell, how I honor you!"

"Nay, I no more deserve honor for consenting than I should have deserved contempt if I had continued to refuse. To do what I deemed

right is not more my wish now than it was twelve hours ago. To what so sudden a change of resolve in one who changes resolves very rarely, may be due, whether to Lady Montfort, to Alban, or to that metaphysical skill with which you wound into my reason, and compelled me to review all its judgments, I do not attempt to determine; yet I thought I had no option but the course I had taken. No; it is fair to yourself to give you the chief credit; you made me desire, you made me resolve, to find an option—I have found one. And now pay your visit where mine has been just paid. It will be three days, I suppose, before Lionel, having joined his new regiment * * * * can be here. And then it will be weeks yet, I believe, before his regiment sails; and I'm all for short courtships."

CHAPTER VI.

Fairthorn frightens Sophy. Sir Isaac is invited by Darrell, and forms one of A Family Circle.

Such a sweet voice in singing breaks out from yon leafless beeches! Waife hears it at noon from his widow. Hark! Sophy has found song once more.

She is seated on a garden bench, looking across the lake towards the gloomy old manor-house and the tall spectre palace beside it. Mrs. Morley is also on the bench, hard at work on her sketch; Fairthorn prowls through the thickets behind, wandering restless and wretched, and wrathful beyond all words to describe. He hears that voice singing; he stops short, perfectly rabid with indignation. "Singing," he muttered,—"singing in triumph, and glowering at the very House she dooms to destruction. Worse than Nero striking his lyre amidst the conflagration of Rome!"

By-and-by Sophy, who somehow or other cannot sit long in any place, and tires that day of any companion, wanders away from the lake, and comes right upon Fairthorn. Hailing, in her unutterable secret bliss, the musician who had so often joined her rambles in the days of unuttered secret sadness, she sprang towards him, with welcome and mirth in a face that would have lured Diogenes out of his tub. Fairthorn recoiled sidelong, growling forth, "Don't—you had better not!"—grinned the most savage grin, showing all his teeth like a wolf; and as she stood, mute with wonder, perhaps with fright, he slunk edgeways off, as if aware of his own murderous inclinations, turning his head more than once, and shaking it at her; then, with the wonted mystery which enveloped his exits, he was gone! —vanished behind a crag, or amidst a bush, or into a hole—heaven knows; but, like the lady in the Siege of Corinth, who warned the renegade Alp of his approaching end, he was "gone."

Twice again that day Sophy encountered the enraged musician; each time the same menacing aspect and weird disappearance.

"Is Mr. Fairthorn ever a little—odd?" asked Sophy timidly of George Morley.

"Always," answered George, dryly.

Sophy felt relieved at that reply. Whatever is habitual in a man's manner, however unpleasant, is seldom formidable. Still Sophy could not help saying,—

"I wish poor Sir Isaac were here!"

"Do you?" said a soft voice behind her; "and pray, who is Sir Isaac?"

The speaker was Darrell, who had come forth with the resolute intent to see more of Sophy, and make himself as amiably social as he could. Guy Darrell could never be kind by halves.

"Sir Isaac is the wonderful dog you have heard me describe," replied George.

"Would he hurt my doe if he came here?" asked Darrell.

"Oh, no," cried Sophy; "he never hurts anything. He once found a wounded hare, and he brought it in his mouth to us so tenderly, and seemed so anxious that we should cure it, which grandfather did, and the hare would sometimes hurt him, but he never hurt the hare."

Said George sonorously,—

> "Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes
> Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros."

Darrell drew Sophy's arm into his own. "Will you walk back to the lake with me," said he, "and help me to feed the swans? George, send your servant express for Sir Isaac. I am impatient to make his acquaintance."

Sophy's hand involuntarily pressed Darrell's arm. She looked up into his face with

innocent, joyous gratitude; feeling at once, and as by magic, that her awe of him was gone.

Darrell and Sophy rambled thus together for more than an hour. He sought to draw out her mind, unaware to herself; he succeeded. He was struck with a certain simple poetry of thought which pervaded her ideas—not artificial sentimentality, but a natural tendency to detect in all life a something of delicate or beautiful which lies hid from the ordinary sense. He found, thanks to Lady Montfort, that, though far from learned, she was more acquainted with literature than he had supposed. And sometimes he changed color, or breathed his short quick sigh when he recognized her familiarity with passages in his favorite authors which he himself had commended, or read aloud, to the Caroline of old.

The next day Waife, who seemed now recovered as by enchantment, walked forth with George, Darrell again with Sophy. Sir Isaac arrived—Immense joy; the doe butts Sir Isaac, who, retreating, stands on his hind legs, and having possessed himself of Waife's crutch, presents fire; the doe in her turn retreats;—half an hour afterwards doe and dog are friends.

Waife is induced without much persuasion, to join the rest of the party at dinner. In the evening, all (Fairthorn excepted) draw round the fire. Waife is entreated by George to read a scene or two out of Shakespeare. He selects the latter portion of "King Lear." Darrell, who never was a playgoer, and who, to his shame be it said, had looked very little into Shakespeare since he left college, was wonder-struck. He himself read beautifully—all great orators, I suppose, do; but his talent was not mimetic—not imitative; he could never have been an actor—never thrown himself into existences wholly alien repugnant to hisown. Grave or gay, stern or kind, Guy Darrell, though often varying, was always Guy Darrell.

But when waife was once in that magical world of art, Waife was gone—nothing left of him;—the part lived as if there were no actor to it;—it was the Fool—it *was* Lear.

For the first time Darrell felt what a grand creature a grand actor really is—what a luminous, unconscious critic bringing out beauties of which no commentator ever dreamed! When the reading was over, talk still flowed; the gloomy old hearth knew the charm of a home circle. All started incredulous when the clock struck one. Just as Sophy was passing to the door, out from behind the window curtain glared a vindictive, spiteful eye. Fairthorn made a mow at her, which 'tis a pity Waife did not see—it would have been a study for Caliban. She uttered a little scream.

"What's the matter?" cried the host.

"Nothing," said she quickly—far too generous to betray the hostile oddities of the musician. "Sir Isaac was in my way—that was all."

"Another evening we must have Fairthorn's flute," said Darrell. "What a pity he was not here to-night!—he would have enjoyed such reading—no one more."

Said Mrs Morley—"He was here once or twice during the evening; but he vanished!"

"Vanishing seems his forte," said George.

Darrell looked annoyed. It was his peculiarity to resent any jest, however slight, against an absent friend; and at that moment his heart was perhaps more warmed towards Dick Fairthorn than to any man living. If he had not determined to be as amiable and mild towards his guest as his nature would permit, probably George might have had the flip of a sarcasm which would have tingled for a month. But as it was, Darrell contented himself with saying gravely—

"No, George; Fairthorn's foible is vanishing; his forte is fidelity. If my fortune were to vanish, Fairthorn would never disappear; and that's more than I would say if I were a King, and Fairthorn—a Bishop!"

After that extraordinary figure of speech, "Good-nights" were somewhat hastily exchanged; and Fairthorn was left behind the curtain with feelings towards all his master's guests as little, it is to be hoped, like those of a Christian Bishop towards his fellow-creatures, as they possibly could be.

CHAPTER VII.

"Domus et placens Uxor."
Fairthorn finds nothing *placens* in the *Uxor*, to whom *Domus* is indebted for its destruction.

ANOTHER day! Lionel is expected to ar-

rive an hour or two after noon. Darrell is in his room—his will once more before him. He has drawn up a rough copy of the codicil by which Fawley is to pass away, and the name of Darrell be consigned to the care of grateful Learning, linked with prizes and fellowships; —a public property—lost for ever to private representatives of its sepulchred bearers. Preparations for departure from the doomed dwelling-house have begun. There are large boxes on the floor; and favorite volumes—chiefly in science or classics—lie piled beside them for selection.

What is really at the bottom of Guy Darrell's heart? Does he feel reconciled to his decision? Is the virtue of his new self-sacrifice in itself a consoling reward? Is that cordial urbanity, that cheerful kindness, by which he has been yet more endearing himself to his guests, sincere or assumed? As he throws aside his pen, and leans his cheek on his hand, the expression of his countenance may perhaps best answer those questions. It has more unmingled melancholy than was habitual to it before, even when in his gloomiest moods; but it is a melancholy much more soft and subdued; it is the melancholy of resignation—that of a man who has ceased a long struggle—paid his offering to the appeased Nemesis, in casting into the sea the thing that had been to him the dearest.

But in resignation, when complete, there is always a strange relief. Despite that melancholy, Darrell is less unhappy than he has been for years. He feels as if a suspense had passed—a load been lifted from his breast. After all, he has secured, to the best of his judgment, the happiness of the living, and, in relinquishing the object to which his own life has been vainly devoted, and immolating the pride attached to it, he has yet, to use his own words, paid his "dues to the dead." No descendant from a Jasper Losely and a Gabrielle Desmarets will sit as mistress of the house in which Loyalty and Honor had garnered, with the wrecks of fortune, the memories of knightly fame—nor perpetuate the name of Darrell through children whose blood has a source in the sink of infamy and fraud. Nor was this consolation that of a culpable pride; it was bought by the abdication of a pride that had opposed its prejudices to living worth—to living happiness. Sophy would not be punished for sins not her own—Lionel not barred from a prize that earth never might replace. What mattered to them a mouldering, old, desolate, manor-house — a few hundreds of pitiful acres? Their children would not be less blooming if their holiday summer-noons were not shaded by those darksome trees—nor less lively of wit, if their school themes were signed in the name, not of Darrell but Haughton.

A slight nervous knock at the door. Darrell has summoned Fairthorn; Fairthorn enters. Darrell takes up a paper; it contains minute instructions as to the demolition of the two buildings. The materials of the new pile may be disposed of, sold, carted away—anyhow, anywhere. Those of the old house are sacred —not a brick to be carried from the precincts around it. No; from foundation to roof, all to be piously removed—to receive formal interment deep in the still bosom of the little lake, and the lake to be filled up and turfed over. The pictures and antiquities selected for the Darrell Museum are, of course, to be carefully transported to London—warehoused safely till the gift from owner to nation be legally ratified. The pictures and articles of less value will be sent to an auction. But when it came to the old family portraits in the manor-house, the old homely furniture, familiarized to sight and use and love from infancy, Darrell was at a loss; his invention failed. That question was reserved for farther consideration.

"And why," says Fairthorn, bluntly and coarsely, urging at least reprieve; "why, if it must be, not wait till you are no more? Why must the old house be buried before you are?"

"Because," answered Darrell, "such an order, left by will, would seem a reproach to my heirs; it would wound Lionel to the quick. Done in my lifetime, and just after I have given my blessing on his marriage, I can suggest a thousand reasons for an old man's whim; and my manner alone will dispel all idea of a covert affront to his charming innocent bride."

"I wish she were hanged, with all my heart," muttered Fairthorn, "coming here to do such astonishing mischief! But, sir, I can't obey you; 'tis no use talking. You must get some one else. Parson Morley will do it—with pleasure too, no doubt; or that

hobbling old man whom I suspect to be a conjuror. Who knows but what he may get knocked on the head as he is looking on with his wicked one eye; and then there will be an end of him, too, which would be a great satisfaction!"

"Pshaw, my dear Dick; there is no one else I can ask but you. The Parson would argue; I've had enough of his arguings; and the old man is the last whom my own arguings could deceive. *Fiat justitia.*"

"Don't sir, don't; you are breaking my heart!—'tis a shame, sir," sobbed the poor faithful rebel.

"Well, Dick, then I must see it done myself; and you shall go on first to Sorrento, and hire some villa to suit us. I don't see why Lionel should not be married next week; then the house will be clear. And—yes—it *was* cowardly in me to shrink. Mine be the task. Shame on me to yield it to another. Go back to thy flute, Dick.

'Neque tibias
Enterpe cohibet, nec Polyhymnia
Lesboum refugit tendere barbiton!'"

At that last remorseless shaft from the Horatian quiver, "Venenatis gravida sagittis," Fairthorn could stand ground no longer; there was a shamble—a plunge—and once more the man was vanished.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Flute-player shows how little Music hath power to soothe the savage breast—of a Musician.

FAIRTHORN found himself on the very spot in which, more than five years ago, Lionel, stung by Fairthorn's own incontinent prickles, had been discovered by Darrell. There he threw himself on the ground, as the boy had done; there, like the boy, he brooded moodily, bitterly—sore with the world and himself. To that letter, written on the day that Darrell had so shocked him, and on which letter he had counted as a last forlorn-hope, no answer had been given. In an hour or so, Lionel would arrive; those hateful nuptials, dooming Fawley as the nuptials of Paris and Helen had doomed Troy, would be finally arranged. In another week the work of demolition would commence. He never meant to leave Darrell to superintend that work. No; grumble and refuse as he might till the last moment, he knew well enough that, when it came to the point, he, Richard Fairthorn, must endure any torture that could save Guy Darrell from a pang. A voice comes singing low through the grove—the patter of feet on the crisp leaves. He looks up; Sir Isaac is scrutinizing him gravely—behind Sir Isaac, Darrell's own doe, led patiently by Sophy,—yes, lending its faithless neck to that female criminal's destroying hand. He could not bear that sight, which added insult to injury. He scrambled up—darted a kick at Sir Isaac—snatched the doe from the girl's hand, and looked her in the face (*her*—not Sophy, but the doe) with a reproach that, if the brute had not been lost to all sense of shame, would have cut her to the heart; then, turning to Sophy, he said, "No, Miss! I reared this creature—fed it with my own hands, Miss. I gave it up to Guy Darrell, Miss; and you shan't steal this from him, whatever else you may do, Miss."

SOPHY.—"Indeed, Mr. Fairthorn, it was for Mr. Darrell's sake that I wished to make frends with the doe—as you would with poor Sir Isaac, if you would but try and like me—a little, only a very little, Mr. Fairthorn."

FAIRTHORN.—"Don't!"

SOPHY.—"Don't what? I am so sorry to see I have annoyed you somehow. You have not been the same person to me the last two or three days. Tell me what I have done wrong; scold me, but make it up."

FAIRTHORN.—"Don't hold out your hand to me! Don't be smiling in my face! I don't choose it! Get out of my sight! You are standing between me and the old house—robbing me even of my last looks at the home which you—"

SOPHY.—"Which I—what?"

FAIRTHORN.—"Don't, I say, don't—don't tempt me. You had better not ask questions—that's all. I shall tell you the truth; I know I shall; my tongue is itching to tell it. Please to walk on."

Despite the grotesque manner and astounding rudeness of the flute-player, his distress of mind was so evident—there was something so genuine and earnest at the bottom of his ludicrous anger—that Sophy began to fell a vague

presentiment of evil. That she was the mysterious cause of some great suffering to this strange enemy, whom she had unconsciously provoked, was clear; and she said, therefore, with more gravity than she had before evinced—

"Mr. Fairthorn, tell me how I have incurred your displeasure. I entreat you to do so; no matter how painful the truth may be, it is due to us both not to conceal it."

A ray of hope darted through Fairthorn's enraged and bewildered mind. He looked to the right—he looked to the left; no one near. Releasing his hold on the doe, he made a sidelong dart towards Sophy, and said, "Hush; do you really care what becomes of Mr. Darrell?"

"To be sure I do."

"You would not wish him to die broken-hearted in a foreign land—that old house levelled to the ground, and buried in the lake! Eh, Miss—eh?"

"How can you ask me such questions?" said Sophy, faintly. "Do speak plainly, and at once."

"Well, I will, Miss. I believe you are a good young lady, after all—and don't wish really to bring disgrace upon all who want to keep you in the dark, and—"

"Disgrace!" interrupted Sophy; and her pure spirit rose, and the soft blue eye flashed a ray like a shooting-star.

"No, I am sure you would not like it; and some time or other you could not help knowing, and you would be very sorry for it. And that boy Lionel, who was as proud as Guy Darrell himself when I saw him last (prouder, indeed)—that *he* should be so ungrateful to his benefactor! And, indeed, the day may come when he may turn round on you, or on the lame old gentleman, and say he has beeu disgraced. Should not wonder at all! Young folks, when they are sweethearting only talk about roses and angels, and such-like; but when husbands and wives fall out, as they always do sooner or later, they don't mince their words then, and they just take the sharpest thing that they can find at their tongue's end. So you may depend on it, my dear Miss, that some day or other that young Haughton will say, 'that you lost him the old manor-house and the old Darrell name,' and have been his disgrace; that's the very word, Miss; I have heard husbands and wives say it to each other over and over again."

Sophy.—"Oh, Mr. Fairthorn, Mr Fairthorn! these horrid words cannot be meant for me. I will go to Mr. Darrell—I will ask him how I can be a dis——." Her lips could not force out the word.

Fairthorn.—"Ay; go to Mr. Darrell if you please. He will deny it all; he will never speak to me again. I don't care—I am reckless. But it is not the less true that you make him an exile because you may make me a beggar."

Sophy (wringing her hands).—"Have you no mercy, Mr. Fairthorn? Will you not explain?"

Fairthorn.—"Yes, if you will promise to keep it secret at least for the next six months—anything for breathing-time."

Sophy (impatiently).—"I promise, I promise; speak, speak."

And then Fairthorn did speak! He did speak of Jasper Losely—his character—his debasement—even of his midnight visit to her host's chamber. He did speak of the child fraudulently sought to be thrust on Darrell—of Darrell's just indignation and loathing. The man was merciless; though he had not an idea of the anguish he was inflicting, he was venting his own anguish. All the mystery of her past life became clear at once to the unhappy girl—all that had been kept from her by protecting love. All her vague conjectures now became a dreadful certainty;—explained now why Lionel had fled her—why he had written that letter, over the contents of which she had pondered, with her finger on her lip, as if to hush her own sighs—all, all! She marry Lionel now! impossible! She bring disgrace upon him in return for such generous, magnanimous affection! She drive his benefactor, her grandsire's vindicator, from his own hearth! She—she—that Sophy who, as a mere infant, had recoiled from the thought of playful subterfuge and tamperings with plain honest truth! She rose before Fairthorn had done; indeed, the tormentor, left to himself, would not have ceased till nightfall.

"Fear not, Mr. Fairthorn," she said, resolutely, "Mr. Darrell will be no exile! his house will not be destroyed. Lionel Haughton shall not wed the child of disgrace! Fear not, sir; all is safe!"

She shed not a tear; nor was there writ on her countenance that CHANGE, speaking of blighted hope, which had passed over it at her young lover's melancholy farewell. No, now she was supported—now there was a virtue by the side of a sorrow—now love was to shelter and save the beloved from disgrace—from disgrace! At that thought, disgrace fell harmless from herself, as the rain from the plumes of a bird. She passed on, her cheek glowing, her form erect.

By the porch door she met Waife and the Morleys. With a kind of wild impetuosity she seized the old man's arm, and drew it fondly, clingingly within her own. Henceforth they, too, were to be, as in years gone by, all in all to each other. George Morley eyed her countenance in thoughtful surprise. Mrs. Morley, bent as usual on saying something seasonably kind, burst into an eulogium on her brilliant color. So they passed on towards the garden side of the house. Wheels—the tramp of hoofs, full gallop; and George Morley, looking up, exclaimed, "Ha! here comes Lionel! and see, Darrell is hastening out to welcome him!"

CHAPTER IX.

The Letter on which Richard Fairthorn relied for the defeat of the conspiracy against Fawley Manor-house. Bad aspects for Houses. The House of Vipont is threatened. A Physician attempts to medicine to a mind diseased. A strange communication, which hurries the reader on to the next Chapter.

IT has been said that Fairthorn had committed to a certain letter his last desperate hope that something might yet save Fawley from demolition, and himself and his master from an exile's home in that smiling nook of earth to which Horace invited Septimius, as uniting the advantages of a mild climate, excellent mutton, capital wine; and affording to Septimius the prospective privilege of sprinkling a tear over the cinder of his poetical friend while the cinder was yet warm; inducements which had no charm at all to Fairthorn, who was quite satisfied with the Fawley south-downs—held in just horror all wishy-washy light wines—and had no desire to see Darrell reduced to a cinder for the pleasure of sprinkling that cinder with a tear.

The letter in question was addressed to Lady Montfort. Unscrupulously violating the sacred confidence of his master, the treacherous wretch, after accusing her, in language little more consistent with the respect due to the fair sex than that which he had addressed to Sophy, of all the desolation that the perfidious nuptials of Caroline Lyndsay had brought upon Guy Darrell, declared that the least Lady Montfort could do to repair the wrongs inflicted by Caroline Lyndsay, was—not to pity his master!—that her pity was killing him. He repeated, with some grotesque comments of his own, but on the whole not inaccurately, what Darrell had said to him on the subject of her pity. He then informed her of Darrell's consent to Lionel's marriage with Sophy; in which criminal espousals it was clear, from Darrell's words, that Lady Montfort had had some nefarious share. In the most lugubrious colors he brought before her the consequences of that marriage—the extinguished name, the demolished dwelling-place, the renunciation of native soil itself. He called upon her, by all that was sacred, to contrive some means to undo the terrible mischief she had originally occasioned, and had recently helped to complete. His epistle ended by an attempt to conciliate and coax. He revived the image of that wild Caroline Lyndsay, to whom HE had never refused a favor; whose earliest sums he had assisted to cast up—to whose young idea he had communicated the elementary principles of the musical gamut—to whom he had played on his flute, winter eve and summer noon, by the hour together; that Caroline Lyndsay who, when a mere child, had led Guy Darrell where she willed, as by a thread of silk. Ah, how Fairthorn had leapt for joy when, eighteen years ago, he had thought that Caroline Lyndsay was to be the sunshine and delight of the house to which she had lived to bring the cloud and the grief! And by all these memories, Fairthorn conjured her either to break off the marriage she had evidently helped to bring about, or, failing that, to convince Guy Darrell that he was not the object of her remorseful and affectionate compassion.

Caroline was almost beside herself at the receipt of this letter. The picture of Guy Darrell effacing his very life from his native land, and destroying the last memorials of his

birthright and his home—the conviction of the influence she still retained over his bleak and solitary existence—the experience she had already acquired that the influence failed where she had so fondly hoped it might begin to repair and to bless, all overpowered her with emotions of yearning tenderness and unmitigated despair.

What could she do? She could not offer herself, again to be rejected. She could not write again, to force her penitence upon the man who, while acknowledging his love to be unconquered, had so resolutely refused to see, in the woman who had once deceived his trust—the Caroline of old! Alas, if he were but under the delusion that her pity was the substitute, and not the companion of love, how could she undeceive him? How say—how write—"Accept me, for I love you." Caroline Montfort had no pride of rank, but she had pride of sex; that pride had been called forth, encouraged, strengthened, throughout all the years of her wedded life. For Guy Darrell's sake, and to him alone, that pride she had cast away—trampled upon; such humility was due to him. But when the humility had been once in vain, could it be repeated—would it not be debasement? In the first experiment she had but to bow to his reproach—in a second experiment she might have but to endure his contempt. Yet how, with her sweet, earnest, affectionate nature—how she longed for one more interview—one more explanation! If chance could but bring it about; if she had but a pretext—a fair reason, apart from any interest of her own, to be in his presence once more! But in a few days he would have left England for ever—his heart yet more hardened in its resolves by the last sacrifice to what it had so sternly recognized to be a due to others. Never to see him more—never! to know how much in that sacrifice he was suffering now—would perhaps suffer more hereafter, in the reaction that follows all strain upon purpose—and yet not a word of comfort from her—her who felt born to be his comforter.

But this marriage, that cost him so much must that be? Could she dare, even for his sake, to stand between two such fair young lives as those of Lionel and Sophy—confide to them what Fairthorn had declared—appeal to their generosity? She shrunk from inflicting such intolerable sorrow. Could it be her duty? In her inability to solve this last problem, she bethought herself of Alban Morley; here, at least, he might give advice—offer suggestion. She sent to his house, entreating him to call. Her messenger was some hours before he found the Colonel, and then brought back but a few hasty lines—"impossible to call that day. The Crisis had come at last! The Country, the House of Vipont, the British Empire, were trembling in the balance. The Colonel was engaged every moment for the next twelve hours. He had the Earl of Montfort, who was intractable and stupid beyond conception, to see and talk over; Carr Vipont was hard at work on the materials for the new Cabinet—Alban was helping Carr Vipont. If the House of Vipont failed England at this moment, it would not be a Crisis, but a CRASH! The Colonel hoped to arrange an interview with Lady Montfort for a minute or two the next day. But perhaps she would excuse him from a journey to Twickenham, and drive into town to see him; if not at home, he would leave word where he was to be found."

By the beard of Jupiter Capitolinus, there are often revolutions in the heart of a woman, during which she is callous to a Crisis, and has not even a fear for a CRASH!

The next day came George's letter to Caroline, with the gentle message from Darrell; and when Dr. F——, whose apprehensions for the state of her health Colonel Morley had by no means exaggerated, called in the afternoon to see the effect of his last prescription, he found her in such utter prostration of nerves and spirits, that he resolved to hazard a dose not much known to great ladies—viz. three grains of plain-speaking, with a minim of frightening.

"My dear lady," said he, "yours is a case in which physicians can be of very little use. There is something on the mind which my prescriptions fail to reach; worry of some sort—decidedly worry. And unless you yourself can either cure that, or will make head against it, worry, my dear Lady Montfort, will end, not in consumption—you are too finely formed to let worry eat holes in the lungs—no; but in a confirmed aneurism of the heart, and the first sudden shock might then be immediately fatal. The heart is a noble organ—bears a great deal but still its endurance has limits. Heart-complaints are more common than they were;—over-education and over civilization, I suspect.

Very young people are not so subject to them; they have flurry, not worry—a very different thing.

"A good chronic silent grief of some years' standing, that gets worried into acute inflammation at the age when feeling is no longer fancy, throws out a heart-disease which sometimes kills without warning, or sometimes, if the grief be removed, will rather prolong than shorten life, by inducing a prudent avoidance of worry in future. There is that worthy old gentleman who was taken so ill at Fawley, and about whom you were so anxious: in his case there had certainly been chronic grief; then came acute worry, and the heart could not get through its duties. Fifty years ago doctors would have cried 'apoplexy!'—nowadays we know that the heart saves the head. Well, he was more easy in his mind the last time I saw him, and, thanks to his temperance, and his constitutional dislike to self-indulgence in worry, he may jog on to eighty, in spite of the stethoscope! Excess in the moral emotions gives heart-disease; abuse of the physical powers, paralysis;—both more common than they were—the first for your gentle sex, the second for our rough one. Both, too, lie in wait for their victims at the entrance into middle life. I have a very fine case of paralysis now; a man built up by nature to live to a hundred--never saw such a splendid formation—such bone and such muscle.

"I would have given Van Amburgh the two best of his lions, and my man would have done for all three in five minutes. All the worse for him, my dear lady—all the worse for him. His strength leads him on to abuse the main fountains of life, and out jumps avenging Paralysis and fells him to earth with a blow. 'Tis your Hercules that Paralysis loves; she despises the weak invalid, who prudently shuns all excess. And so, my dear lady, that assassin called Aneurism lies in wait for the hearts that abuse their own force of emotion; sparing hearts that, less vital, are thrifty in waste and supply. But you are not listening to me! And yet my patient may not be quite unknown to your ladyship; for in happening to mention, the other day, to the lady who attends to and nurses him, that I could not call this morning, as I had a visit to pay to Lady Montfort at Twickenham, she became very anxious about you, and wrote this note, which she begged me to give you. She seems very much attached to my patient—not his wife nor his sister. She interests me;—capital nurse—cleverish woman too. Oh! here is the note."

Caroline, who had given but little heed to this recital, listlessly received the note—scarcely looked at the address—and was about to put it aside, when the good doctor, who was intent upon rousing her by any means, said, "No, my dear lady, I promised that I would see you read the note; besides, I am the most curious of men, and dying to know a little more who and what is the writer."

Caroline broke the seal and read as follows:—

"If Lady Montfort remembers Arabella Fossett, and will call at Clare Cottage, Vale of Health, Hampstead, at her ladyship's earliest leisure, and ask for Mrs. Crane, some information, not perhaps important to Lady Montfort, but very important to Mr. Darrell, will be given."

Lady Montfort startled the doctor by the alertness with which she sprang to her feet and rang the bell.

"What is it?" asked he.

"The carriage immediately," cried Lady Montfort as the servant entered.

"Ah! you are going to see the poor lady, Mrs. Crane, eh? Well, it is a charming drive, and just what I should have recommended. Any exertion will do you good. Allow me;—why, your pulse is already fifty per cent. better. Pray, what relation is Mrs. Crane to my patient?"

"I really don't know; pray excuse me, my dear Dr. F——."

"Certainly; go while the day is fine. Wrap up;—a close carriage, mind;—and I will look in to-morrow."

CHAPTER X.

Wherein is insinuated the highest compliment to Woman ever paid to her sex by the Author of this work.

Lady Montfort has arrived at Clare Cottage. She is shown by Bridgett Greggs into a small room upon the first floor; folding-doors to some other room closely shut—evidences of sickness in the house;—phials on the chimney-piece—a tray with a broth-basin on the table—a saucepan on the hob—the sofa one of

those that serve as a bed, which Sleep little visits, for one who may watch through the night over some helpless sufferer—a woman's shawl thrown carelessly over its hard narrow bolster;—all, in short, betraying that pathetic untidiness and discomfort which says that a despot is in the house to whose will order and form are subordinate;—the imperious Tyranny of Disease establishing itself in a life that, within those four walls, has a value not to be measured by its worth to the world beyond. The more feeble and helpless the sufferer, the more sovereign the despotism—the more submissive the servitude.

In a minute or two one of the folding-doors silently opened and as silently closed, admitting into Lady Montford's presence a grim woman in iron gray.

Caroline could not, at the first glance, recognize that Arabella Fossett, of whose handsome, if somewhat too strongly defined and sombre countenance, she had retained a faithful reminiscence. But Arabella had still the same imposing manner which had often repressed the gay spirits of her young pupil; and as she now motioned the great lady to a seat, and placed herself beside, an awed recollection of the schoolroom bowed Caroline's lovely head in mute respect.

Mrs. Crane.—"You too are changed since I saw you last,—that was more than five years ago, but you are not less beautiful. *You* can still be loved;—*you* would not scare away the man whom you might desire to save. Sorrow has its partialities. Do you know that I have a cause to be grateful to you, without any merit of your own. In a very dark moment of my life—only vindictive and evil passions crowding on me—your face came across my sight. Goodness seemed there so beautiful—and, in this face, Evil looked so haggard! Do not interrupt me. I have but few minutes to spare you. Yes; at the sight of that face, gentle recollections rose up. You had ever been kind to me; and truthful, Caroline Lyndsay—truthful.

"Other thoughts came at the beam of that face, as other thoughts come when a strain of unexpected music reminds us of former days. I cannot tell how, but from that moment a something more like womanhood, than I had known for years, entered into my heart. Within that same hour I was sorely tried—galled to the quick of my soul. Had I not seen you before, I might have dreamed of nothing but a stern and dire revenge. And a purpose of revenge I *did* form. But it was not to destroy—it was to save! I resolved that the man who laughed to scorn the idea of vows due to me—vows to bind life to life—should yet sooner or later be as firmly mine as if he had kept his troth; that my troth at least should be kept to him, as if it had been uttered at the altar. Hush, did you hear a moan?—No! He lies yonder, Caroline Lyndsay—mine, indeed, till the grave us do part. These hands have closed over him, and he rests in their clasp, helpless as an infant." Involuntarily Caroline recoiled. But looking into that careworn face, there was in it so wild a mixture of melancholy tenderness, with a resolved and fierce expression of triumph, that, more impressed by the tenderness than by the triumph, the woman sympathized with the woman; and Caroline again drew near, nearer than before, and in her deep soft eyes pity alone was seen. Into those eyes Arabella looked, as if spell-bound, and the darker and sterner expression in her own face gradually relaxed and fled, and only the melancholy tenderness was left behind. She resumed:—

"I said to Guy Darrell that I would learn, if possible, whether the poor child whom I ill-used in my most wicked days, and whom you, it seems, have so benignly sheltered, was the daughter of Matilda—or, as he believed, of a yet more hateful mother. Long ago I had conceived a suspicion that there was some ground to doubt poor Jasper's assertion, for I had chanced to see two letters addressed to him—one from that Gabrielle Desmarets, whose influence over his life had been so baleful—in which she spoke of some guilty plunder with which she was coming to London, and invited him again to join his fortunes with her own. Oh, but the cold, bloodless villany of the tone!—the ease with which crimes for a gibbet were treated as topics for wit!" Arabella stopped—the same shudder came over her as when she had concluded the epistles abstracted from the dainty pocket-book. "But in the letter were also allusions to Sophy, to another attempt on Darrell to be made by Gabrielle herself. Nothing very clear; but a doubt did suggest itself—'Is she writing to him about his own child?' The

other letter was from the French nurse with whom Sophy had been placed as an infant. It related to inquiries in person, and a visit to her own house, which Mr. Darrell had recently made; that letter also seemed to imply some deception, though but by a few dubious words. At that time the chief effect of the suspicion these letters caused was but to make me more bent on repairing to Sophy my cruelties to her childhood.

"What if I had been cruel to an infant who, after all, was not the daughter of that false, false Matilda Darrell! I kept in my memory the French nurse's address. I thought that when in France I might seek and question her. But I lived only for one absorbing end. Sophy was not then in danger; and even my suspicions as to her birth died away. Pass on:—Guy Darrell! Ah, Lady Montfort! his life has been embittered like mine; but he was man, and could bear it better. He has known, himself, the misery of broken faith, of betrayed affection, which he could pity so little when its blight fell on me; but you have excuse for desertion—you yourself were deceived; and I pardon him, for he pardoned Jasper, and we are fellow-sufferers. You weep pardon my rudeness. I did not mean to pain you. Try and listen calmly—I must hurry on. On leaving Mr. Darrell I crossed to France. I saw the nurse; I have ascertained the truth; here are the proofs in this packet. I came back—I saw Jasper Losely. He was on the eve of seeking you, whom he had already so wronged—of claiming the child, or rather of extorting money for the renunciation of a claim to one whom you had adopted. I told him how vainly he had hitherto sought to fly from me. One by one I recited the guilty schemes in which I had baffled his purpose—all the dangers for which I had rescued his life.

"I commanded him to forbear the project he had then commenced. I told him I would frustrate that project as I had frustrated others. Alas, alas! why is this tongue so harsh?—why does this face so belie the idea of human kindness? I did but enrage and madden him; he felt but the reckless impulse to destroy the life that then stood between himself and the objects to which he had pledged his own self-destruction. I thought I should die by his hand. I did not quail. Ah! the ghastly change that came over his face—the one glance of amaze and superstitious horror; his arm obeyed him not; his strength, his limbs, forsook him; he fell at my feet—one side of him stricken dead! Hist! that is his voice—pardon me!" and Arabella flitted from the room, leaving the door ajar.

A feeble Voice, like the treble of an infirm old man, came painfully to Caroline's ear.

"I want to turn; help me. Why am I left alone? It is cruel to leave me so—cruel!"

In the softest tones to which that harsh voice *could* be tuned, the grim woman apologized and soothed.

"You gave me leave, Jasper dear. You said it would be a relief to you to have her pardon as well as theirs."

"Whose pardon?" asked the Voice querulously.

"Caroline Lyndsay's—Lady Montfort's."

"Nonsense! What did I ever do against her? Oh—ah! I remember now. Don't let me have it over again. Yes—she pardons me, I suppose! Get me my broth, and don't be long!"

Arabella came back, closing the door; and while she busied herself with that precious saucepan on the hob—to which the Marchioness Montfort had become a very socondary object—she said, looking towards Caroline from under her iron-grey ringlets—

"You heard—*he misses me!* He can't bear me out of his sight now—me, me! You heard!"

Meekly Lady Montfort advanced, bringing in her hand the tray with the broth-basin.

"Yes, I heard! I must not keep you; but let me help while I stay."

So the broth was poured forth and prepared, and with it Arabella disappeared. She returned in a few minutes, beckoned to Caroline, and said in a low voice—

"Come in—say you forgive him! Oh, you need not fear him; a babe could not fear him now!"

Caroline followed Arabella into the sick room. No untidiness there; all so carefully, thoughtfully arranged. A pleasant room too—with windows looking full on the sunniest side of the Vale of Health; the hearth so cheerily clear, swept so clean—the very ashes out of sight; flowers—costly exotics—on the table, on the mantelpiece; the couch drawn towards the window; and on that couch, in the

gay rich dressing-gown of former days warm coverlets heaped on the feet, snow-white pillows propping the head, lay what at first seemed a vague, undistinguishable mass—lay, what, as the step advanced, and the eye became more accurately searching, grew into Jasper Losely.

Yes! there, too weak indeed for a babe to fear, lay all that was left of the Strong Man! No enemy but himself had brought him thus low—spendthrift, and swindler, and robber of his own priceless treasures — Health and Strength—those grand rent-rolls of joy which Nature had made his inheritance. As a tree that is crumbling to dust under the gnarls of its bark, seems, the moment ere it falls, proof against time and the tempest;—so, within all decayed, stood that image of strength—so, air scarcely stirring, it fell. "And the pitcher was broken at the fountain; and the wheel was broken at the cistern; vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher."

Jasper turned his dull eye towards Caroline, as she came softly to his side, and looked at her with a piteous gaze. The stroke that had shattered the form had spared the face; and illness and compulsory abstinence from habitual stimulants had taken from the aspect much of the coarseness—whether of shape or color—that of late years had disfigured its outline—and supplied the delicacy which ends with youth by the delicacy that comes with the approach of death. So that, in no small degree, the beauty which had been to him so fatal a gift, was once more visible—the features growing again distinct, as wanness succeeded to the hues of intemperance, and emaciation to the bloated cheeks and swollen muscle. The goddess whose boons adorn the outward shell of the human spirit, came back to her favorite's death-couch as she had come to the cradle—not now as the Venus Erycina, goddess of Smile and Jest, but as the warning Venus Libitina, the goddess of Doom and the Funeral.

"I'm a very poor creature," said Jasper, after a pause. "I can't rise—I can't move without help. Very strange!—supernatural! She always said that if I raised my hand against her, it would fall palsied!" He turned his eye towards Arabella with a glare of angry terror. "She is a witch!" he said, and buried his face in the pillow. Tears rolled down the grim woman's cheek.

Lady Montfort.—"She is rather your good ministering spirit. Do not be unkind to her. Over her you have more power now than you had when you were well and strong. She lives but to serve you; command her gently."

Jasper was not proof against that sweet voice. With difficulty he wrenched himself round, and again looked long at Caroline Montfort, as if the sight did him good; then he made a sign to Arabella, who flew to his side and raised him.

"I have been a sad dog," he said, with a mournful attempt at the old rollicking tone,—"a very sad dog—in short, a villain! But all ladies are indulgent to villains—in fact, prefer them. Never knew a lady who could endure 'a good young man'—never! So I am sure you will forgive me, miss—ma'am. Who is this lady? When it comes to forgiveness, there are so many of them! Oh, I remember now—your ladyship will forgive me—'tis all down in black and white what I've done—Bella has it. You see *this* hand—I can write with this hand—this is not paralyzed. This is not the hand that I tried to raise against her. But *basta*, *basta!* where was I? My poor head! I know what it is to have a head now!—ache, ache!—boom, boom—weight, weight—heavy as a church bell—hollow as a church bell—noisy as a church bell! Brandy! give me brandy, you witch!—I mean Bella, good Bella, give me brandy!"

"Not yet, Jasper dear. You are to have it every third hour; it is not time yet, dearest; you must attend to the doctor, and try to get well and recover your strength. You remember I told you how kind Lady Montfort had been to your father, and you wished to see and thank her."

"My father—my poor, poor father! You've been kind to him! Bless you, bless you! And you will see him? I want his pardon before I die. Don't forget, and—and—"

"Poor Sophy!" said Mrs. Crane.

"Ah yes! But she's well off now, you tell me. I can't think I have injured her. And really girls and women are intended to be a little useful to one. *Basta*, *basta!*"

"Mr. Darrell—"

"Yes, yes, yes! I forgive him, or he forgives me; settle it as you like. But my father's pardon, Lady Montfort, you will get me *that!*"

"I will, I will."

He looked at her again, and smiled. Arabella gently let his head fall back upon the pillow.

"Throw a handkerchief over my face," he said feebly, "and leave me; but be in call; I feel sleepy." His eyes closed; he seemed asleep even before they stole from the room.

"You will bring his father to him?" said Arabella, when she and Lady Montfort were again alone. "In this packet is Jasper's confession of the robbery for which that poor old man suffered. I never knew of that before. But you see how mild he is now!—how his heart is changed; it is indeed changed more than he shows; only you have seen him at the worst—his mind wanders a little to-day; it does sometimes. I have a favor to ask of you. I once heard a preacher, not many months ago; he affected me as no preacher ever did before. I was told that he was Colonel Morley's nephew. Will you ask Colonel Morley to persuade him to come to Jasper?"

"My cousin, George Morley! He shall come, I promise you; so shall your poor patient's forgiving father. Is there more I can do?"

"No. Explain to Mr. Darrell the reason why I have so long delayed sending to him the communication which he will find in the packet I have given to you, and which you will first open, reading the contents yourself—a part of them, at least, in Jasper's attestation of his stratagem to break off your marriage with Mr. Darrell, may yet be of some value to you—you had better also show the papers to Colonel Morley—he may complete the task. I had meant, on returning to England, or before seeing Mr. Darrell, to make the inquiries which you will see are still necessary. But then came this terrible affliction! I have been able to think of nothing else but Jasper;—terrible to quit the house which contains him for an hour;—only, when Dr. F. told me that he was attending you, that you were ill, and suffering, I resolved to add to this packet Jasper's own confession. Ah, and he gave it so readily, and went yesterday through the fatigue of writing with such good heart. I tell you that there is a change within him; there *is*—there *is*. Well, well—I resolved to give you the packet to transmit to Mr. Darrell, for somehow or other I connected your illness with your visit to him at Fawley!"

"My visit to Mr. Darrell!"

"Jasper saw you as your carriage drove from the park gate, not very many days since. Ah, you change color! You have wronged that man; repair the wrong; you have the power!"

"Alas! no," murmured Caroline, "I have not the power!"

"Pooh!—he loves you still. *You* are not one of those whom men forget."

Caroline was silent, but involuntarily she lowered her veil. In an instant the acute sense of the grim woman detected the truth.

"Ah! Pride—pride in both," she said. "I understand—I dare not blame *him* here. But you—you were the injurer; you have no right to pride; you will see him again."

"No—never—never!" faltered Caroline, with accents scarcely audible under her veil.

Arabella was silent for a moment, and Lady Montfort rose hastily to depart.

"You will see him again, I tell you;" and Arabella then, following her to the door—

"Stay; do you think HE will die?"

"Good heavens! Mr. Darrell?"

"No, no—Jasper Losely!"

"I hope not. What does Dr. F. say?"

"He will not tell me. But it is not the paralysis alone; he might recover from that—so young still. There are other symptoms; that dreadful habit of stimulants! He sinks if he has them not—they hasten death if he has. But—but—but—HE IS MINE, AND MINE ONLY, TO THE GRAVE NOW!"

CHAPTER XI.

The CRISIS—Public and Private.

LADY MONTFORT'S carriage stopped at Colonel Morley's door just as Carr Vipont was coming out. Carr, catching sight of her, bustled up to the carriage window.

"My dear Lady Montfort!—not seen you for an age! What times we live in! How suddenly THE CRISIS has come upon us! Sad loss in poor dear Montfort; no wonder you mourn for him! Had his failings, true—who is not mortal?—but always voted right; al-

ways to be relied on in times of CRISIS! But this crotchety fellow, who has so unluckily, for all but himself, walked into that property, is the loosest fish! And what is a House divided against itself? Never was the Constitution in such peril!—I say it deliberately!—and here is the Head of the Viponts humming and haaing, and asking whether Guy Darrell will join the Cabinet. And if Guy Darrell will not, we have no more chance of the Montfort interest than if we were Peep-o'-day Boys. But excuse me—I must be off; every moment is precious in times of CRISIS. Think, if we can't form a Cabinet by to-morrow night—only think what may happen; the other fellows will come in, and then—THE DELUGE!"

Carr is gone to find mops and Dame Partingtons to stave off the Deluge. Colonel Morley has obeyed Lady Montfort's summons, and has entered the carriage. Before she can speak, however, he has rushed into the subject of which he himself is full. "Only think—I knew it would be so when the moment came; all depends upon Guy Darrell; Montfort, who seems always in a fright lest a newspaper should fall on his head and crush him, says that if Darrell, whom he chooses to favor just because the newspapers do, declines to join, the newspapers will say the CRISIS is a job! Fancy!—a job—the CRISIS! Lord Mowbray de l'Arco and Sir Josiah Snodge, who are both necessary to a united government, but who unluckily detest each other, refuse to sit in the same Cabinet, unless Darrell sit between—to save them, I suppose, from the fate of the cats of Kilkenny. Sir John Cautly, our crack county member, declares that if Darrell does not come in, 'tis because the CRISIS is going too far! Harry Bold, our most popular speaker, says, if Darrell stay out, 'tis a sign that the CRISIS is a retrograde movement! In short, without Darrell the CRISIS will be a failure, and the House of Vipont smashed—Lady Montfort—smashed! I sent a telegram (oh, that I should live to see such a word introduced into the English language!—but, as Carr says, what times these are!) to Fawley this morning, entreating Guy to come up to town at once. He answers by a line from Horace, which means, 'that he will see me shot first.' I must go down to him; only waiting to know the result of certain negotiations as to measures. I have but one hope There *is* a measure which Darrell always privately advocated—which he thoroughly understands—which, placed in his hands, would be triumphantly carried; one of those measures, Lady Montfort, which, if defective, shipwreck a government; if framed, as Guy Darrell could frame it, immortalize the minister who concocts and carries them. This is all that Darrell needs to complete his fame and career. This is at length an occasion to secure a durable name in the history of his country; let him reject it, and I shall tell him frankly that his life has been but a brilliant failure.

"Since he has not a seat in Parliament, and usage requires the actual possession of that qualification for a seat in the Cabinet, we must lose his voice in the Commons. But we can arrange that; for if Darrell will but join the government, and go to the Lords, Sir Josiah Snodge, who has a great deal of voice and a great deal of jealousy, will join too—head the Vipont interest in the Commons—and speak to the country—speak every night—and all night, too, if required. Yes; Darrell must take the peerage—devote himself for a year or two to this great measure—to the consolidation of his fame—to the redemption of the House of Vipont—and to the Salvation of the Empire; and then, if he please, 'solve senescentem'—that is, he may retire from harness, and browse upon laurels for the rest of his days!"

Colonel Morley delivered himself of this long address without interruption from a listener interested in every word that related to Guy Darrell, and in every hope that could reunite him to the healthful activities of life.

It was now Lady Montfort's turn to speak; though, after subjects so momentous as the CRISIS and its speculative consequences, private affairs, relating to a poor little girl like Sophy—nay, the mere private affairs of Darrell himself, seemed a pitiful bathos. Lady Montfort, however, after a few words of womanly comment upon the only part of the Colonel's discourse which touched her heart, hastened on to describe her interview with Arabella, and the melancholy condition of Darrell's once formidable son-in-law. For that last, the Colonel evinced no more compassionate feeling than any true Englishman, at

the time I am writing, would demonstrate for a murderous Sepoy tied to the mouth of a cannon.

"A very good riddance," said the Colonel, dryly. "Great relief to Darrell, and to every one else whom that monster tormented and preyed on; and with his life will vanish the only remaining obstacle in righting poor Willy's good name. I hope to live to collect, from all parts of the country, Willy's old friends, and give them a supper, at which I suppose I must not get drunk; though I should rather like it, than not! But I interrupt you! go on."

Lady Montfort proceeded to state the substance of the papers she had perused in reference to the mystery which had been the cause of so much disquietude and bitterness.

The Colonel stretched out his hand eagerly for the documents thus quoted. He hurried his eye rapidly over the contents of the first paper he lit on, and then said, pulling out his watch, "Well, I have half an hour yet to spare in discussing these matters with you—may I order your coachman to drive round the Regent's Park?—better than keeping it thus at my door,—with four old maids for opposite neighbors." The order was given, and the Colonel again returned to the papers. Suddenly he looked up—looked full into Lady Montfort's face, with a thoughtful, searching gaze, which made her drop her own eyes; and she saw that he had been reading Jasper's confession, relating to his device for breaking off her engagement to Darrell, which in her hurry and excitement she had neglected to abstract from the other documents. "Oh, not that paper—you are not to read that," she cried, quickly covering the writing with her hand.

"Too late, my dear cousin. I have read it. All is now clear. Lionel was right; and I was right, too, in my convictions, though Darrell put so coolly aside my questions when I was last at Fawley. I am justified now in all the pains I took to secure Lionel's marriage—in the cunning cruelty of my letter to George! Know, Lady Montfort, that if Lionel had sacrificed his happiness to respect for Guy's ancestor-worship, Guy Darrell would have held himself bound in honor never to marry again. He told me so—told me he should be a cheat if he took any step to rob one from whom he had exacted such an offering—of the name, and the heritage for which the offering had been made. And I then resolved that County Guy should not thus irrevocably shut the door on his own happiness! Lady Montfort, you know that this man loves you—as, verily, I believe, never other man in our cold century loved woman;—through desertion—through change—amidst grief—amidst resentment—despite pride;—dead to all other love—shrinking from all other ties—on, constant on—carrying in the depth of his soul to the verge of age, secret and locked up, the hopeless passion of his manhood. Do you not see that it is through you, and you alone, that Guy Darrell has for seventeen years been lost to the country he was intended to serve and to adorn? Do you not feel that if he now reject this last opportunity to redeem years so wasted, and achieve a fame that may indeed link his Ancestral Name to the honors of Posterity, you, and you alone, are the cause?"

"Alas—alas—but what can I do?"

"Do!—ay, true. The poor fellow is old now; you cannot care for him!—you still young, and so unluckily beautiful!—you, for whom young princes might vie. True; you can have no feeling for Guy Darrell, except pity!"

"*Pity!* I hate the word!" cried Lady Montfort, with as much petulance as if she had still been the wayward lively Caroline of old.

Again the Man of the World directed towards her face his shrewd eyes, and dropped out, "See him!"

"But I have seen him. You remember I went to plead for Lionel and Sophy—in vain!"

"Not in vain. George writes me word that he has informed you of Darrell's consent to their marriage. And I am much mistaken if his greatest consolation in the pang that consent must have cost him, be not the thought that it relieves you from the sorrow and remorse his refusal had occasioned to you. Ah! there is but one person who can restore Darrell to the world—and that is yourself!"

Lady Montfort shook her head drearily.

"If I had but an excuse—with dignity—with self-respect—to—to—"

"An excuse! You have an absolute necessity to communicate with Darrell. You have to give to him these documents—to explain how you came by them. Sophy is with him;

you are bound to see her on a subject of such vital importance to herself. Scruples of prudery! You, Caroline Lyndsay, the friend of his daughter—you whose childhood was reared in his very house—you whose mother owed to him such obligations—you to scruple in being the first to acquaint him with information affecting him so nearly! And why, forsooth? Because, ages ago, your hand was, it seems, engaged to him, and you were deceived by false appearances, like a silly young girl as you were."

Again Lady Montfort shook her head drearily—drearily.

"Well," said the Colonel, changing his tone, "I will grant that those former ties can't be renewed now. The man now is as old as the hills, and you had no right to expect that he would have suffered so much at being very naturally jilted for a handsome young Marquess."

"Cease, sir, cease," cried Caroline, angrily. The Colonel coolly persisted.

"I see now that such nuptials are out of the question. But has the world come to such a pass that one can never at any age have a friend in a lady unless she marry him? Scruple to accompany me—me your cousin—me your nearest surviving relation—in order to take back the young lady you have virtually adopted?—scruple to trust yourself for half an hour to that tumbledown old Fawley! Are you afraid that the gossips will say you, the Marchioness of Montfort, are running after a gloomy old widower, and scheming to be mistress of a mansion more like a ghost-trap than a residence for civilized beings? Or are you afraid that Guy Darrell will be fool and fop enough to think you are come to force on him your hand? Pooh, pooh! Such scruples would be in place if you were a portionless forward girl, or if he were a conceited young puppy, or even a suspicious old *roué*. But Guy Darrell—a man of his station, his character, his years!

"And you, cousin Caroline, what are you? Surely, lifted above all such pitiful crotchets by a rank amongst the loftiest gentlewomen of England; ample fortune, a beauty that in itself is rank and wealth; and, above all, a character that has passed with such venerated purity through an ordeal in which every eye seeks a spot, every ear invites a scandal. But as you will. All I say is, that Darrell's future may be in your hands; that, after to-morrow, the occasion to give at least noble occupation and lasting renown to a mind that is devouring itself and stifling its genius, may be irrevocably lost; and that I do believe, if you said to-morrow to Guy Darrell, 'You refused to hear me when I pleaded for what you thought a disgrace to your name, and yet even *that* you at last conceded to the voice of affection as if of duty—now hear me when I plead by the side of your oldest friend on behalf of your honor, and in the name of your forefathers,'—if YOU say THAT, he is won to his country. You will have repaired a wrong; and, pray, will you have compromised your dignity?"

Caroline had recoiled into the corner of the carriage, her mantle close drawn round her breast, her veil lowered; but no sheltering garb or veil could conceal her agitation.

The Colonel pulled the check-string. "Nothing so natural; you are the widow of the Head of the House of Vipont. You are, or ought to be, deeply interested in its fate. An awful CRISIS, long expected, has occurred. The House trembles. A connection of that House can render it an invaluable service; that connection is the man at whose hearth your childhood was reared; and you go with me—me, who am known to be moving heaven and earth for every vote that the House can secure, to canvass this wavering connection for his support and assistance. Nothing, I say, so natural; and yet you scruple to serve the House of Vipont—to save your country! You may well be agitated. I leave you to your own reflections. My time runs short; I will get out here. Trust me with these documents. I will see to the rest of this long painful subject. I will send a special report to you this evening, and you will reply by a single line to the prayer I have ventured to address to you."

CHAPTER XII.

AND LAST.

In which the Author endeavors, to the best of his ability, to give a final reply to the question, "What will he do with it?"

SCENE—The banks of the lake at Fawley. George is lending his arm to Waife; Mrs. Mor-

ley, seated on her camp-stool at the opposite side of the water, is putting the last touch to her sketch of the manor-house; Sir Isaac, reclined, is gravely contemplating the swans; the doe, bending over him, occasionally nibbles his ear; Fairthorn has uncomfortably edged himself into an angle of the building, between two buttresses, and is watching, with malignant eye, two young forms, at a distance, as they move slowly yonder, side by side, yet apart, now lost, now emerging, through the gaps between melancholy leafless trees. Darrell, having just quitted Waife and George, to whose slow pace he can ill time his impatient steps, wonders why Lionel, whom, on arriving, he had, with brief cordial words, referred to Sophy for his fate, has taken more than an hour to ask a simple question, to which the reply may be pretty well known beforehand. He advances towards those melancholy trees. Suddenly one young form leaves the other—comes with rapid stride through the withered fern. Pale as death, Lionel seizes Guy Darrell's hand with convulsive grasp, and says, "I must leave you, sir. God bless you! All is over. I was the blindest fool—she refuses me."

"Refuses you!—impossible! For what reason?"

"She cannot love me well enough to marry," answered Lionel, with a quivering lip, and an attempt at that irony in which all extreme anguish, at least in our haughty sex, delights to seek refuge or disguise. "Likes me as a friend, a brother, and so forth, but nothing more. All a mistake, sir—all, except your marvellous kindness to me—to her—for which Heaven ever bless you."

"Yes, all a mistake of your own, foolish boy," said Darrell, tenderly; and, turning sharp, he saw Sophy hastening by, quickly and firmly, with her eyes looking straightward—on into space. He threw himself in her path.

"Tell this dull kinsman of mine, that 'faint heart never won fair lady.' You do not mean seriously, deliberately, to reject a heart that will never be faint with a meaner fear than that of losing you?"

Poor Sophy! She kept her blue eyes still on the cold gray space, and answered by some scarce audible words—words which in every age girls intending to say No, seem to learn as birds learn their song; no one knows who taught them, but they are ever to the same tune. "Sensible of the honor"—"Grateful"—"Some one more worthy," etc. etc.

Darrell checked this embarrassed jargon. "My question, young lady, is solemn; it involves the destiny of two lives. Do you mean to say that you do not love Lionel Haughton well enogh to give him your hand, and return the true faith which is pledged with his own?"

"Yes," said Lionel, who had gained the side of his kinsman; "yes, that is it. Oh Sophy—Ay or No?"

"No!" fell from her pale, firm lips—and in a moment more she was at Waife's side, and had drawn him away from George. "Grandfather, grandfather!—home, home; let us go home at once, or I shall die!"

Darrell has kept his keen sight upon her movements—upon her countenance. He sees her gesture—her look—as she now clings to her grandfather. The blue eyes are not now coldly fixed on level air, but raised upward as for strength from above. The young face is sublime with its woe, and with its resolve.

"Noble child," muttered Darrell, "I think I see into her heart. If so, poor Lionel, indeed! *My* pride has yielded, hers never will!"

Lionel, meanwhile, kept beating his foot on the ground, and checking indignantly the tears that sought to gather to his eyes. Darrell threw his arm round the young man's shoulder, and led him gently, slowly away, by the barbed thorn-tree—on by the moss-grown crags.

Waife, meanwhile, is bending his ear to Sophy's lip. The detestable Fairthorn emerges from between the buttresses, and shambles up to George, thirsting to hear his hopes confirmed, and turning his face back to smile congratulation on the gloomy old house that he thinks he has saved from the lake.

Sophy has at last convinced Waife that his senses do not deceive him, nor hers wander. She has said, "O grandfather, let us ever henceforth be all in all to each other. You are not ashamed of me—I am so proud of you. But there are others akin to me, grandfather, whom we will not mention; and you would be ashamed of me if I brought disgrace on one who would confide to me his name, his honor;

and should I be as proud of you, if you asked me do it?"

At these words Waife understands all, and he has not an argument in reply; and he suffers Sophy to lead him towards the house. Yes, they will go hence—yes, there shall be no schemes of marriage! They had nearly reached the door, when the door itself opened violently, and a man rushing forth caught Sophy in his arms, and kissed her forehead, her cheek, with a heartiness that it is well Lionel did not witness! Speechless and breathless with resentment, Sophy struggled, and in vain, when Waife, seizing the man by the collar, swung him away with a "How dare you, sir," that was echoed back from the hillocks—summoned Sir Isaac at full gallop from the lake—scared Fairthorn back to his buttresses—roused Mrs. Morley from her sketch—and, smiting the ears of Lionel and Darrell, hurried them, mechanically as it were, to the spot from which that thunder-roll had pealed.

"How dare I?" said the man, resettling the flow of his disordered coat—"How dare I kiss my own niece? my own sister's orphan child? Venerable Bandit, I have a much better right than you have. Oh my dear injured to Sophy, think that I was ashamed of your poor cotton print—to think that to your pretty face I have been owing fame and fortune—and you, you wandering over the world—child of the sister of whose beauty I was so proud—of her for whom, alas, in vain! I painted Watteaus and Greuzes upon screens and fans!" Again he clasped her to his breast; and Waife this time stood mute, and Sophy passive—for the man's tears were raining upon her face, and washed away every blush of shame as to the kiss they hallowed.

"But where is my old friend William Losely?—where is Willy?" said another voice, as a tall, thin personage stepped out from the hall, and looked poor Waife unconsciously in the face.

"Alban Morley!" faltered Waife, "*you* are but little changed!"

The Colonel looked again, and in the elderly, lame, one-eyed, sober-looking man, recognized the wild jovial Willy, who had tamed the most unruly fillies, taken the most frantic leaps, carolled forth the blithest song—madcap, good-fellow, frolicsome, childlike darling of gay and grave, young and old!

"'Eheu, fugaces, Postume, Postume,
Labuntur anni,'"

said the Colonel, insensibly imbibing one of those Horatian particles that were ever floating in that classic atmosphere—to Darrell medicinal, to Fairthorn morbific. "Years slide away, Willy, mutely as birds skim through air; but when friend meets with friend after absence, each sees the print of their crows' feet on the face of the other. But we are not too old yet, Willy, for many a meet at the fireside! Nothing else in our studs, we can still mount our hobbies; and thorough-bred hobbies contrive to be in at the death. But you are waiting to learn by what title and name this stranger lays claim to so peerless a niece. Know then—Ah, here comes Darrell. Guy Darrell, in this young lady you will welcome the grandchild of Sidney Branthwaite, our old Eton school friend, a gentleman of as good blood as any in the land!"

"None better," cried Fairthorn, who has sidled himself into the group; "there's a note on the Branthwaite genealogy, sir, in your father's great work upon 'Monumental Brasses.'"

"Permit me to conclude, Mr. Fairthorn," resumed the Colonel; "Monumental Brasses are painful subjects. Yes Darrell, yes Lionel; this fair creature, whom Lady Montfort might well desire to adopt, is the daughter of Arthur Branthwaite, by marriage with the sister of Frank Vance, whose name I shrewdly suspect nations will prize, and whose works princes will hoard, when many a long genealogy, all blazoned in azure and *or*, will have left not a scrap for the moths."

"Ah!" murmured Lionel, "was it not I, Sophy, who taught you to love your father's genius! Do you not remember how, as we bent over his volume, it seemed to translate to us our own feelings?—to draw us nearer together? He was speaking to us from his grave."

Sophy made no answer; her face was hidden on the breast of the old man, to whom she still clung closer and closer

"Is it so? Is it certain? Is there no doubt that she is the child of these honored parents?" asked Waife tremulously.

"None," answered Alban; "we bring with us proofs that will clear up all my story."

The old man bowed his head over Sophy's

fair locks for a moment; then raised it, serene and dignified; "You are mine for a moment yet, Sophy," said he.

"Yours as ever—more fondly, gratefully than ever," cried Sophy.

"There is but one man to whom I can willingly yield you. Son of Charles Haughton, take my treasure."

"I consent to that," cried Vance, "though I am put aside like a Remorseless Baron. And, Lionellmio, if Frank Vance is a miser, so much the better for his niece."

"But," faltered Lionel.

Oh, falter not. Look into those eyes; read that blush now! She looks coy, not reluctant. She bends before him—adorned as for love, by all her native graces. Air seems brightened by her bloom. No more the Outlaw-Child of Ignominy and Fraud, but the Starry Daughter of POETRY AND ART! Lo, where they glide away under the leafless, melancholy trees. Leafless and melancholy! No! Verdure and blossom and the smile of spring are upon every bough!

"I suppose," said Alban, "it will not now break Lionel's heart to learn that not an hour before I left London, I heard from a friend at the Horse Guards that it has been resolved to substitute the —— regiment for Lionel's; and it will be for some time yet, I suspect, that he must submit to be ingloriously happy. Come this way, George; a word in your ear." And Alban drawing his nephew aside, told him of Jasper's state, and of Arabella's request. "Not a word to-day, on these mournful topics, to poor Willy. To-day let nothing add to his pain to have lost a grandchild, or dim his consolation in the happiness and security his Sophy gains in that loss. But to-morrow you will go and see the stricken-down sinner, and prepare the father for the worst. I made a point of seeing Dr. F. last night. He gives Jasper but a few weeks. He compares him to a mountain, not merely shattered by an earthquake, but burned out by its own inward fires."

"A few weeks only," sighed George. "Well, Time, that seems everything to man, has not even an existence in the sight of God. To that old man I owe the power of speech to argue, to exhort, and to comfort;—*he was training me to kneel by the deathbed of his son!*"

"You believe," asked the Man of the World, "in the efficacy of a deathbed repentance, when a sinner has sinned till the power of sinning be gone?"

"I believe," replied the Preacher, "that in health there is nothing so unsafe as trust in a deathbed repentance; I believe that on the deathbed it cannot be unsafe to repent!"

Alban looked thoughtful, and George turned to rejoin Waife, to whom Vance was narrating the discovery of Sophy's parentage; while Fairthorn, as he listened, drew his flute from his pocket, and began screwing it, impatient to vent in delicate music what he never could have set into words for his blundering, untunable tongue. The Colonel joins Darrell, and hastens to unfold more fully the story which Vance is reciting to Waife.

Brief as it can, be the explanation due to the reader.

Vance's sister had died in childbirth. The poor young poet, unfitted to cope with penury, his sensitive nature combined with a frame that could feebly resist the strain of exhausting emotions, disappointed in fame, despairing of fortune, dependent for bread on his wife's boyish brother, and harassed by petty debts in a foreign land, had been fast pining away, even before an affliction to which all the rest seemed as nought. With that affliction he broke down at once, and died a few days after his wife, leaving an infant not a week old. A French female singer, of some repute in the theatres, and making a provincial tour, was lodging in the same house as the young couple. She had that compassionate heart which is more common than prudence or very strict principle with the tribes who desert the prosaic true world for the light sparkling false one. She had assisted the young couple, in their later days, with purse and kind offices; had been present at the birth of the infant—the death of the mother; and had promised Arthur Branthwaite that she would take care of his child, until she could safely convey it to his wife's relations; while he wept to own that they, poor as himself, must regard such a charge as a burthen.

The singer wrote to apprise Mrs. Vance of the death of her daughter and son-in-law, and the birth of the infant whom she undertook shortly to send to England. But the babe,

whom meanwhile she took to herself, got hold of her affections; with that yearning for children which makes so remarkable and almost uniform a characteristic of French women (if themselves childless) in the wandering Bohemian class that separates them from the ordinary household affections never dead in the heart of woman till womanhood itself be dead, the singer clung to the orphan little one to whom she was for the moment rendering the cares of a mother. She could not bear to part with it; she resolved to adopt it as her own. The knowledge of Mrs. Vance's circumstances —the idea that the orphan, to herself a blessing, would be an unwelcome encumbrance to its own relations—removed every scruple from a mind unaccustomed to suffer reflection to stand in the way of an impulse. She wrote word to Mrs. Vance that the child was dead. She trusted that her letter would suffice, without other evidence, to relations so poor, and who could have no suspicion of any interest to deceive them.

Her trust was well founded. Mrs. Vance and the boy Frank, whose full confidence and gratitude had been already secured to their correspondent for her kind offices to the young parents, accepted, without a demur or a question, the news that the infant was no more. The singer moved on to the next town at which she was professionally engaged. The infant, hitherto brought up by hand, became ailing. The medical adviser called in, recommended the natural food, and found in a village close by, the nurse to whom a little time before Jasper Losely had consigned his own daughter. The latter died; the nurse then removed to Paris to reside with the singer, who had obtained a lucrative appointment at one of the metropolitan theatres. In less than two years the singer herself fell a victim to a prevailing epidemic. She had lived without thought of the morrow; her debts exceeded her means; her effects were sold. The nurse, who had meanwhile became a widow, came for advice and refuge to her sister, who was in the service of Gabrielle Desmarets.

Gabrielle being naturally appealed to, saw the infant, heard the story, looked into the statement which, by way of confession, the singer had drawn up, and signed, in a notary's presence, before she died; looked into the letters from Mrs. Vance, and the schoolboy scrawls from Frank, both to the singer and to the child's parents, which the actress had carefully preserved; convinced herself of the poverty and obscurity of the infant's natural guardians and next of kin; and said to Jasper, who was just dissipating the fortune handed over to him as survivor of his wife and child, "There is what, if well-managed, may retain your hold on a rich father-in-law, when all else has failed. You have but to say that this infant is his grandchild; the nurse we can easily bribe, or persuade to confirm the tale. I, whom he already knows as that respectable baroness, your Matilda's friend, can give to the story some probable touches. The lone childless man must rejoice to think that a tie is left to him. The infant is exquisitely pretty; her face will plead for her. His heart will favor the idea too much to make him very rigorous in his investigations. Take the infant. Doubtless in your own country you can find some one to rear it at little or no expense, until the time come for appeal to your father-in-law, when no other claim on his purse remains."

Jasper assented with the *insouciant* docility by which he always acknowledged Gabriellle's astuter intellect. He saw the nurse; it was clear that she had nothing to gain by taking the child to English relations so poor. They might refuse to belive her, and certainly could not reward. To rid herself of the infant, and obtain the means to return to her native village with a few hundred francs in her purse, there was no promise she was not willing to make, no story she was too honest to tell, no paper she was too timid to sign. Jasper was going to London on some adventure of his own. He took the infant—chanced on Arabella—the reader knows the rest. The indifference ever manifested by Jasper to a child not his own—the hardness with which he had contemplated and planned his father's separation from one whom he had imposed by false pretexts on the old man's love, and whom he only regarded as an alien encumbrance upon the scanty means of her deluded protector—the fitful and desultory mode in which, when (contrary to the reasonings which Gabrielle had based upon a very large experience of the credulities of human nature in general, but in utter ignorance of the nature peculiar to Darrell) his first attempt at imposition had been so scornfully re-

sisted by his indignant father-in-law, he had played fast and loose with a means of extortion which, though loth to abandon, he knew would not bear any strict investigation;—all this is now clear to the reader.

And the reader will also comprehend why, partly from fear, that his father might betray him, partly from a compassionate unwillingness to deprive the old man of a belief in which William Losely said he had found such solace, Jasper, in his last interview with his father, shrank from saying, "but she is not your grandchild!" The idea of recurring to the true relations of the child naturally never entered into Jasper's brain. He considered them to be as poor as himself. *They* buy from him the child of parents, whom they had evidently, by their letters, taxed themselves to the utmost, and in vain, to save from absolute want! So wild seemed the notion, that he had long since forgotten that relations so useless existed. Fortunately the Nurse had preserved the written statement of the singer—the letters by Mrs. Vance and Frank—the certificate of the infant's birth and baptism—some poor relics of Sophy's ill-fated parents—manuscripts of Arthur's poems—baby-caps with initials and armorial crests, wrought, before her confinement, by the young wife—all of which had been consigned by the singer to the nurse, and which the nurse willingly disposed of to Mrs. Crane, with her own formal deposition of the facts, confirmed by her sister, Gabrielle's old confidential attendant, and who, more favored than her mistress, was living peaceably in the rural scenes of her earlier innocence, upon the interest of the gains she had saved in no innocent service—confirmed yet more by references to many whose testimonies could trace, step by step, the child's record from its birth to its transfer to Jasper, and by the brief but distinct avowal, in tremulous lines, writ by Jasper himself. As a skein crossed and tangled, when the last knot is loosened, slips suddenly free, so this long bewildering mystery now became clear as a commonplace! What years of suffering Darrell might have been saved had he himself seen and examined the nurse—had his inquiry been less bounded by the fears of his pride—had the great lawyer not had himself for a client!

Darrell silently returned to Alban Morley the papers over which he had cast his eye as they walked slowly to and fro the sloping banks of the lake.

"It is well," said he, glancing fondly, as Fairthorn had glanced before him, towards the old House, now freed from doom, and permitted to last its time. "It is well," he repeated, looking away towards that part of the landscape where he could just catch a glimpse of Sophy's light form beyond the barbed thorn-tree; "it is well," he repeated thrice with a sigh. "Poor human nature! Alban, can you conceive it? I, who once so dreaded that that poor child should prove to be of my blood, now in knowing that she is not, feel a void, a loss! To Lionel I am so distant a kinsman!—to his wife, to his children, what can I be? A rich old man; the sooner he is in his grave the better. A few tears, and then the will! But, as your nephew says, 'This life is but a school;' the new-comer in the last form thinks the head-boy just leaving so old! And to us, looking back, it seems but the same yesterday whether we were the last comer or the head-boy."

"I thought," said Alban, plaintively, "that, for a short time at least, I had done with 'painful subjects.' You revel in them! County Guy, you have not left school yet; leave it with credit; win the best prize." And Alban plunged at once into THE CRISIS. He grew eloquent; the Party, the Country, the Great Measure to be intrusted to Darrell, if he would but undertake it as a member of the Cabinet; the Peerage, the House of Vipont, and immortal glory!—eloquent as Ulysses haranguing the son of Peleus in *Troilus and Cressida*.

Darrell listened coldly; only while Alban dwelt on "the Measure," in which, when it was yet too unripe for practical statesmen, he had attached his faith as a thinker, the orator's eye flashed with young fire. A great truth is eternally clear to a great heart that has once nourished its germ and forseen its fruits. But when Alban quitted that part of his theme, all the rest seemed wearisome to his listener. They had now wound their walk to the opposite side of the lake, and paused near the thick beech-tress, hallowed and saddened by such sweet associations to the mournful owner.

"No, my dear Alban," said Darrell, "I can-

not summon up sufficient youth and freshness of spirit to re-enter the turbulent arena I have left. Ah! look yonder where Lionel and Sophy move! Give me, I do not say Lionel's years, but Lionel's wealth of hope, and I might still have a wish for fame and a voice for England; but it is a subtle truth, that where a man misses a home, a link between his country and himself is gone. Vulgar ambition may exist—the selfish desire of power; they were never very strong in me, and now less strong than the desire of rest; but that beautiful, genial, glorious union of all the affections of social citizen, which begins at the hearth and widens round the land, is not for the hermit's cell."

Alban was about to give up the argument in irritable despair, when, happening to turn his eye towards the farther depth of the beech-grove, he caught a glimpse—no matter what of; but quickening his step in the direction to which his glance had wandered, he seated himself on the gnarled roots of a tree that seemed the monarch of the wood, widespreading as that under which Tityrus reclined of old; and there, out of sight of the groups on the opposite banks of the lake—there, as if he had sought the gloomiest and most secret spot for what he had yet to say, he let fall, in the most distinct yet languid tones of his thorough-bred, cultured enunciation, "I have a message to you from Lady Montfort. Restless man, do come nearer, and stand still. I am tired to death." Darrell approached, and, leaning against the trunk of the giant tree, said, with folded arms and compressed lips—

"A message from Lady Montfort!"

"Yes. I should have told you, by-the-by, that it was she who, being a woman, of course succeeded where I, being a man, despite incredible pains and trouble, signally failed, discovered Arabella Fossett, *alias* Crane, and obtained from her the documents which free your life for ever from a haunting and torturing fear. I urged her to accompany me hither, and place the documents herself in your hand. She refused; you were not worth so much trouble, my dear Guy. I requested her at least to suffer me to show to you a paper containing Jasper Losely's confession of a conspiracy to poison her mind against you some years ago—a conspiracy so villanously ingenious that it would have completely exonerated any delicate and proud young girl from the charge of fickleness in yielding to an impulse of pique and despair. But Lady Montfort did not wish to be exonerated; your good opinion has ceased to be of the slightest value to her. But to come to the point. She bade me tell you that, if you persist in sheltering yourself in a hermit's cell from the fear of meeting her—if she be so dangerous to your peace—you may dismiss such absurd apprehension. She is going abroad, and, between you and me, my dear fellow, I have not a doubt that she will marry again before six months are out. I spoke of your sufferings; she told me she had not the smallest compassion for them."

"Alban Morley, you presumed to talk thus of me?" cried Darrell, livid with rage.

"Strike, but hear me. It is true you would not own, when I was last at Fawley, that she was the cause of your secluded life, of your blighted career; but I knew better. However, let me go on before you strangle me. Lady Montfort's former feelings of friendship for you are evidently quite changed; and she charged me to add, that she really hoped that you would exert your good sense and pride (of which Heaven knows you have plenty) to eradicate an absurd and romantic sentiment so displeasing to her, and so——"

"It is false! it is false! What have I done to you, Colonel Morley, that you should slander me thus? *I* send you messages of taunt and insult, Mr. Darrell? I—*I!* you cannot believe it—you cannot!"

Caroline Montfort stood between the two, as if she had dropped from heaven.

A smile, half in triumph, half in irony, curved the lip of the fine gentleman. It faded instantly as his eye turned from the face of the earnest woman to that of the earnest man. Alban Morley involuntarily bowed his head, murmured some words unheard, and passed from the place, unheeded.

Not by concert nor premeditation was Caroline Montfort on that spot; she had consented to accompany her cousin to Fawley, but before reaching the park gates her courage failed her; she would remain within the carriage; the Colonel, wanted in London as soon as possible, whatever the result of his political mission to Darrell, could not stay long at Fawley; she would return with him. Vance's presence and impatient desire to embrace his

niece did not allow the Colonel an occasion for argument and parley. Chafed at this fresh experience of the capricious uncertainty of woman, he had walked on with Vance to the manor-house. Left alone, Caroline could not endure the stillness and inaction which increased the tumult of her thoughts; she would at least have one more look—it might be the last—at the scenes in which her childhood had sported—her youth known its first happy dreams.

But a few yards across those circumscribed demesnes, on through those shadowy serried groves, and she should steal unperceived in view of the house, the beloved lake, perhaps even once more catch a passing glimpse of the owner. She resolved, she glided on; she gained the beech-grove, when, by the abrupt wind of the banks, Darrell and Alban came suddenly on the very spot. The flutter of her robe, as she turned to retreat, caught Alban's eye; the reader comprehends with what wily intent, conceived on the moment, that unscrupulous schemer shaped the words which chained her footstep, and then stung her on to self-disclosure. Trembling and blushing, she now stood before the startled man—He startled out of every other sentiment and feeling than that of ineffable, exquisite delight to be once more in her presence; she, after her first passionate outburst, hastening on, in confused broken words, to explain that she was there but by accident—by chance; confusion growing deeper and deeper—how explain the motive that had charmed her steps to the spot.

Suddenly from the opposite bank came the music of the magic flute, and her voice as suddenly stopped and failed her.

"Again — again," said Darrell, dreamily. "The same music ! the same air ! and this the same place on which we two stood together when I first dared to say, 'I love !' Look ! we are under the very tree ! Look ! there is the date I carved on the bark when you were gone, but had left Hope behind. Ah, Caroline, why can I not now resign myself to age ? Why is youth, while I speak, rushing back into my heart, into my soul ? Why cannot I say, 'Gratefully I accept your tender friendship; let the past be forgotten; through what rests to me of the future while on earth, be to me as a child. I cannot—I cannot ! Go !"

She drew nearer to him, gently, timidly. "Even that, Darrell—even that; something in your life—let me be something still !"

"Ay," he said with melancholy bitterness, "you deceive me no longer now ! You own that, when here we stood last, and exchanged our troth, you in the blossom, and I in the prime, of life—you own that it was no woman's love, deaf to all calumny, proof to all craft that could wrong the absent; no woman's love, warm as the heart, undying as the soul, that you pledged me then ?"

"Darrell, it was not—though then I thought it was."

"Ay, ay," he continued with a smile, as if of triumph in his own pangs, "so *that* truth is confessed at last ! And when, once more free, you wrote to me the letter I returned, rent in fragments, to your hand—or when, forgiving my rude outrage and fierce reproach, you spoke to me so gently yonder, a few weeks since, in these lonely shades, then what were your sentiments, your motives ? Were they not those of a long-suppressed and kind remorse ?—of a charity akin to that which binds rich to poor, bows happiness to suffering ?—some memories of gratitude—nay, perhaps of childlike affection ?—all amiable, all generous, all steeped in that sweetness of nature to which I unconsciously rendered justice in the anquish I endured in losing you; but do not tell me that even *then* you were under the influence of woman's love."

"Darrell, I was not."

"You own it, and you suffer me to see you again ! Trifler and cruel one, is it but to enjoy the sense of your undiminished, unalterable power ?"

"Alas, Darrell ! alas ! why am I here ?—why so yearning, yet so afraid to come ? Why did my heart fail when these trees rose in sight against the sky ?—why, why—why was it drawn hither by the spell I could not resist ? Alas, Darrell, alas ! I am a woman *now*—and—and this is——" She lowered her veil, and turned away; her lips could not utter the word, because the word was not pity, not remorse, not remembrance, not even affection; and the woman loved now too well to subject to the hazard of rejection—Love !

"Stay, oh stay !" cried Darrell. "Oh that I could dare to ask you to complete the sentence ! I know—I know by the mysterious sympathy of my own soul, that you could

never deceive me more! Is it—is it——" His lips falter too; but her hand is clasped in his; her head is reclining upon his breast; the veil is withdrawn from the sweet downcast face; and softly on her ear steal the murmured words, "Again and now, till the grave—Oh, by this hallowing kiss, again—the Caroline of old!"

Fuller and fuller, spreading, wave after wave, throughout the air, till it seem interfused and commingled with the breath which the listeners breathe, the flute's mellow gush streams along. The sun slopes in peace towards the west; not a cloud in those skies, clearer seen through yon boughs stripped of leaves, and rendering more vivid the evergreen of the arbute and laurel.

Lionel and Sophy are now seated on yon moss-grown trunk; on either side the old gray-haired man, as if agreeing for a while even to forget each other, that they may make *him* feel how fondly he is remembered. Sophy is resting both her hands on the old man's shoulder, looking into his face, and murmuring in his ear with voice like the coo of a happy dove. Ah! fear not, Sophy; *he* is happy too—*he* who never thinks of himself. Look—the playful smile round his arch lips; look—now he is showing off Sir Isaac to Vance; with austere solemnity the dog goes through his tricks; and Vance, with hand stroking his chin, is moralizing on all that might have befallen had he grudged his three pounds to that famous INVESTMENT.

Behind that group, shadowed by the Thorn-tree, stands the PREACHER, thoughtful and grave, foreseeing the grief that must come to the old man with the morrow, when he will learn that a guilty son nears his end, and will hasten to comfort Jasper's last days with pardon. But the Preacher looks not down to the death-couch alone; on and high over death looks the Preacher! By what words Heavenly Mercy may lend to his lips shall he steal away, yet in time, to the soul of the dying, and justify murmurs of hope to the close of a life so dark with the shades of its past? And to him, to the Preacher, they who survive—the two mourners—will come in their freshness of sorrow! He, the old man? Nay, to him there will be comfort. His spirit Heaven's kindness had tempered to trials; and, alas! for *that* son, what could father hope more than a death free from shame, and a chance yet vouchsafed for repentance? But she, the grim, iron-grey woman? The Preacher's interest, I know, will soon centre on her:—And balm may yet drop on thy wounds, thou poor, grim, iron-grey, loving woman!

Lo! that traitor, the Flute-player, over whom falls the deep grateful shade from the eaves of the roof-tree reprieved; though unconscious as yet of that happy change in the lot of the master, which, ere long, may complete (and haply for sons sprung in truth from the blood of the Darrell) yon skeleton pile, and consummate, for ends nobler far, the plan of a grand life imperfect;—though as yet the musician nor knows nor conjectures the joy that his infamous treason to Sophy as little deserves; yet, as if by those finer perceptions of sense impressed ere they happen, by changes of pleasure and of pain, which Art so mysteriously gives to the minds from which music is born, his airs, of themselves, float in joy: Like a bird at the coming of spring, it is gladness that makes him melodious.

And Alban Morley, seemingly intent upon the sketch which his amiable niece-in-law submits to his critical taste ere she ventures to show it to Vance, is looking from under his brows towards the grove, out from which, towering over all its dark brethern, soars the old trysting beech-tree, and to himself he is saying, "Ten to one that the old House of Vipont now weather the CRISIS; and a thousand to one that I find at last my arm-chair at the hearth of my school-friend, Guy Darrell!"

And the lake is as smooth as glass; and the swans, hearkening the music, rest still, with white breasts against the grass of the margin; and the doe, where she stands, her forefeet in the water, lifts her head wistfully, with nostrils distended, and wondering soft eyes that are missing the master. Now full on the beech-grove shines the westering sun; out from the gloomy beech-grove into the golden sunlight—they come, they come—Man and the Helpmate, two lives rebetrothed—two souls reunited. Be it evermore! Amen.

END OF "WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?"